Lilith

the independent Jewish women's magazine

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You Are What You Wear!

Extra Commandments God's Been Keeping in Her Back Pocket

Move Over Martha Stewart: How to Throw a Jewish Bridal Shower

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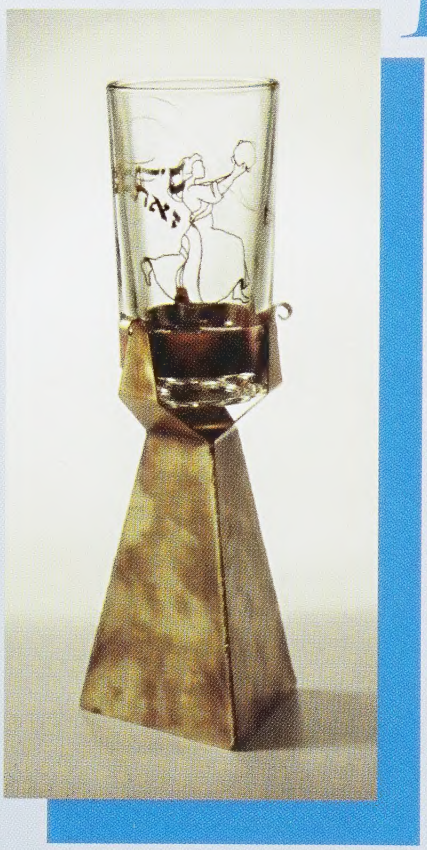

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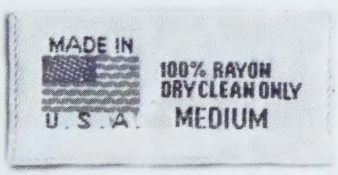

brought to light the dismal reality of sweatshops, we're still wearing clothing made under inhumane conditions—only we often don't realize why.

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Cover: Miriam Schapiro, "femmagist," painter and printmaker, is an internationally known artist and pioneer in the feminist art movement. She is represented by The Steinbaum Krauss Gallery, 132 Greene Street, New York, NY 10012, tel.: (212) 431-4224, fax: (212) 431-3252, e-mail: SKGallery@aol.com

© Miriam Schapiro, The Garden of Eden, *1990, acrylic on canvas, 95.5" x 95.5" Photo by gamma one conversions. Courtesy Steinbaum Krauss Gallery, NYC.*

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from the editor

This issue is the fourth of LILITH's twentieth anniversary quartet. Note the fresh new design we've created to mark this milestone, and share our delight in welcoming our new advertisers, among them The Body Shop, whose founder Anita Roddick telephoned from England to say how much she enjoys LILITH.

But subscriptions and advertising cover only about a third of LILITH's costs, and since LILITH stands alone, independent of sponsorship from any organization or institution (an independence which has served us well for over 20 years), we depend on the generous tax-deductible contributions of our readers to enable us to publish. When you read the names featured on pages 46 and 47, you'll recognize the women and men, foundations and corporations, whose generous financial support has enabled LILITH to reach this day. These people deserve notice and thanks from every LILITH reader, because no non-profit intellectual periodical can survive without such backing.

Please help toast the magazine's 21st year by making your own tax-deductible contribution to keep LILITH alive on into the 21st century. We need your support to keep publishing the remarkable articles you find only in LILITH. You can make contributions by check or by credit card, by mail or fax (see the info at the bottom of the Table of Contents page), or by calling our new toll-free number: 1-888-2-LILITH.

Because so many of LILITH's back issues are constantly in demand, LILITH is developing several collections of reprints on specific subjects: new ceremonies and rituals, Jewish wedding ideas, women's Holocaust memoirs and more. For example, board member Frances Brandt has facilitated the reprinting of our "Health and Healing" reprints (see page 30).

Since LILITH's inception in 1976 we have showcased the diversity of Jewish women's lives. Lesbian and gay Jews, for example, have been invisible in the pages of most other Jewish periodicals. When we publish an article on, say, a woman's coming out to her Jewish family as a lesbian, we are not only making it more comfortable for Jewish lesbians to identify as Jews, but we are also presenting, to a largely heterosexual audience, life experiences of Jews they might not otherwise have understood.

In light of this history, we were happy to receive recent support for reprints of LILITH articles on gay and lesbian Jews. A collective grant, coordinated by longtime LILITH reader Jill Vexler, will help make possible these reprints (available for $10 from LILITH). The funds came from more than a dozen people, including members of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah in Manhattan, the mothers of two CBST members, a rabbi from Texas, and others who care about making available past articles to readers who may have missed them when they were first published.

We would like to send you order forms for all these packets—of which there are now about 10—so that you can circulate them at conferences, meetings or congregational events. Just let us know when, where, and how big an audience you expect. And if you are a program planner, teaching a course or organizing adult-education programs, please tell us what kind of reprints you'd find most helpful. Some examples: Jewish organizations have ordered "Jewish Women and Work" reprints for staffers and visiting girls on Take Our Daughters to Work Day. Ma'yan, the Jewish Women's Project at the JCC on Manhattan's Upper West Side, has purchased copies of our "Meet the Matriarchs" packet on Bible women—made possible by the Charles H. Revson Foundation—as take-home reading for a Shavuot event. Please remember that, while we plan a glorious future for LILITH, we're also circulating landmark articles from our past, and you can help us create and distribute these specialized resource materials on Jewish women.

Susan

—Susan Weidman Schneider

Lilith

In the Garden of Eden, long before the eating of the apple... The Holy One created the first human beings—a man, Adam, and a woman, Lilith. Lilith said, "We are equal because we are created from the same earth."

(from The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b)

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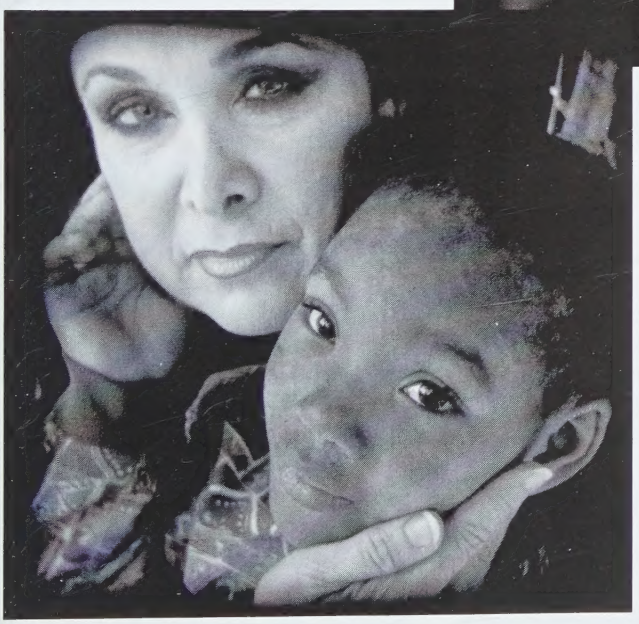
"Don't Let Me Perish Like a Hound"

The embattled town is Winona, Texas, home to some 457 people, mostly poor, black farmers, where poisoned air and ground water are accused of causing serious illness to its citizens. The company suspected is the American Ecology Environmental Services Corporation, which—its name notwithstanding—disposes of low-level radioactive and hazardous waste for some of the largest corporations in the United States.

And the woman who has decided to take on the company is Winona resident Phyllis Glazer, daughter of a man whose family perished in the Holocaust. She has devoted both her inheritance and the injunction to "never forget" to the fight on behalf of the town.

Glazer and other citizens charge that leakage from the Winona plant has caused extraordinary health problems among the town's children—including tumors, seizures, respiratory problems, unformed lungs and rare genetic diseases. Having settled there shortly after her father's death, Glazer has since sent her mother, husband and children away, staying to continue the fight.



Tammy Cromer-Campbell's photographs of Texas children who may have been harmed by toxic chemicals in the town of Winona. Above, Jamesia and cousins; left: Phyllis Glazer, founder of Mothers Organized to Stop Environmental Sins.

"We've got to get the word out," says Glazer, her passion for a just resolution unabated. "There are thousands of towns like this, and it's always in poor communities."

Materials distributed as part of the efforts of MOSES—Mothers Organized to Stop Environmental Sins—which Glazer organized, are peppered with recollections of her father, quotes from the Talmud and from one Yiddish song by Herman Yablokoff that reads *"Oysgeyn vel ikh muzn vi a hint,"* "People—don't let me perish in the streets like a hound."

Indeed, it is the story of the Holocaust, and her father's own escape from Riga two days before the Germans captured it, that inspire her involvement. "My father told me that his family lost their lives because their fellow men had closed their minds and their hearts to them. He told me of the doors that neighbors never opened to give them shelter," she writes in one of her appeals for support. "In Winona, the knock had come to my door."

Glazer's campaign has involved many lawsuits, including those against the company, against the federal Environmental Protection Agency and against the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission for failing to protect Winona's citizens. Earlier this year the company, embroiled in questions of cleanup and restitution, suspended its operations, and in a counter suit charged that the expense of Glazer's repeated lawsuits alone have forced them to close.

But whatever the costs of this undertaking, there is only one bottom line for Glazer: "I can't quit until all children are not poisoned in their homes. . . . If the Jewish people don't pay attention to this, no one will." —*Sarah Blustain*

Judith Plaskow's un-Orthodox take on the Feminism and Orthodoxy Conference

Judith Plaskow, long-time activist and professor of religious studies at Manhattan College, is probably best known for her book Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism From a Feminist Perspective, *which formulated a radically new Jewish feminist theology. Here Plaskow reflects on the emergence of Orthodox women's feminist activism.*

Left, in a women's prayer service. Bottom, Blu Greenberg, conference organizer.

PHOTOS BY JOAN ROTH

The atmosphere at the Grand Hyatt Hotel on February 16 and 17 reminded me of the first National Jewish Women's Conference, which took place almost 25 years earlier. As 1,000 women gathered for the International Conference on Feminism and Orthodoxy—450 were expected—there was a palpable feeling of excitement in the air, a sense of pushing boundaries and moving into uncharted territory.

In a brief article, it is impossible even to mention all the plenaries, panels, workshops and study sessions that were crammed back to back into two too-short days. They ran the gamut from an opening plenary in which writer and conference organizer Blu Greenberg ably laid out the gains of Orthodox feminists over the last decade and suggested an agenda for the future, to workshops on personal and religious issues—infertility, the Orthodox superwoman, *tallit* and *tefillin*, lifecycle ceremonies—to numerous sessions on the process of *halachic* change and specific *halachic* questions, to panels on educational and political issues.

As a non-Orthodox observer, my take on the conference is doubtless idiosyncratic, but I found much on the program that was thought-provoking and that made me very glad I had come. Since I am now working on issues of sexuality, I came to the conference with a special interest in the plenary panel on *agunot* ("chained women"—in this context, women whose husbands refuse to grant them a Jewish bill of divorce), and it did not disappoint me. Dr. Susan Aronoff, Rivka Haut, and Honey Rackman, the founders of Agunah Inc., an organization founded to help *agunot,* offered a trenchant and deeply disturbing analysis of how working with *agunot* has introduced them to a new vocabulary of extortion, violence, concubinage and polygamy. Offering many specific examples, they argued that these abuses are alive and well in the Orthodox community and the *beit din* (Jewish court) system. To my mind, their discussion showed how the issue of *agunot* unmasks the deeply patriarchal character of Jewish law and the continuing profound power imbalance in its interpretation and implementation. As they made clear, the fact that the Orthodox community has turned to civil mechanisms (such as the New York State *get* law) to solve the problem, rather than taking responsibility for creatively remedying the inequities of the *halachic* system is a disgrace to all who care about *halacha.*

Some of the other sessions that most excited me were those that deviated somewhat from the central tone and themes of the conference. On the afternoon of the first day, Israeli scholar Dr. Noam Zohar offered a remarkably incisive and radical critique of the systemic character of gender discrimination in *halacha.* He argued that there is a connection between the banishment of women from public religious life, the disempowering of women through their exclusion from Talmud

study, and the control of women by individual men in marriage.

While Zohar's analysis provoked little response—I heard no one commenting on or discussing it during the rest of the conference—this was by no means the case with the remarks of another Israeli, Dr. Tamar Ross. In the context of a session on Women and Learning, Ross focused on the theological premises of *halachic* observance, discussing the ways in which feminist theology threatens the notion of Torah *min hashamayim* (Torah from heaven). Defending the idea both that Torah is formulated in a particular social mold and that every word of it is nonetheless sacred and revelatory, Ross offered a complicated argument for the successive revelations of the voice of God from Sinai throughout Jewish history. Even the patriarchal elements in Torah, she asserted, represent aspects of the gradual unfolding of the divine, but the insights of feminism must be regarded in the same light. That Ross's comments became a major topic of conversation at the dinner table and on bathroom lines indicated to me that there is far more interest in theological reflection and analysis among Orthodox feminists than I would have expected or than was reflected in the program.

While I left the conference feeling exhilarated and intellectually stimulated, there were two very different dimensions of the event I found disturbing. One was the great deference shown (male) rabbinic authority. Aside from the fact that, to my mind, there were far too many rabbis on the program, the honor shown these rabbis stood in marked contrast to the homage paid to women's activism. This was most striking and upsetting to me in the session on *agunot*. The three women from Agunah Inc., who had devoted years of their lives to this issue, did not receive a standing ovation from the audience, but Emanuel Rackman, one of the first rabbis to speak out on the problem, did. This pattern, which was visible throughout the two days, indicated to me a lack of respect for and trust in women's power to make change. It was as if the women at the conference could not take credit for and give honor to the remarkable things they had achieved in the last decade. They, therefore, could not seize the opportunity provided by the conference to brainstorm strategies for women's activism or target areas where women could put pressure on the Orthodox community to bring about *halachic* change or to redress the power imbalance between men and women in other ways.

JOAN ROTH

The second thing I found disturbing had little to do with the conference itself. Rather, from the first moment I walked into the Grand Hyatt, I was struck by the extraordinary lack of contact between Orthodox and non-Orthodox feminists. Virtually everyone I knew at the conference was a non-Orthodox visitor like myself, who couldn't stay away from a large and ground-breaking Jewish feminist event. In 25 years of Jewish feminist activism, I had made few Orthodox friends and gotten only episodic—and in some ways, accidental—glimpses into what was going on among feminists in the Orthodox community. Given the richness of the conference, the general level of Jewish literacy of the attendees, and the extraordinary knowledge and commitment of many of the speakers, this made me very sad. I left with the conviction that Orthodox and non-Orthodox feminists need to find ways to work together—whether through informal meetings, conferences, or particular joint projects. If we non-Orthodox feminists have learned a lot about women's empowerment we could share with our Orthodox sisters, they have a wealth of Jewish knowledge—and experience on the battlefront—that could enrich our efforts to transform Jewish tradition.

—Judith Plaskow

To order audio or video tapes of the conference, contact:
International Conference on Feminism and Orthodoxy
c/o Esther Farber
3333 Henry Hudson Pkwy, Suite 115
Riverdale NY 10463

To inquire via e-mail: emckee@IDT.NET

To receive information about the activities of women's tefila groups around the world and to keep up with the burgeoning activism of Orthodox women who really do feel energized by the conference and its aftermath, contact wtn@mbhs.bergtraum.k12.ny.us

Women of the West

The American West has always been pioneering country. And it was so again as the Western Jewish Studies Association conferred its imprint of legitimacy on Jewish women's studies by devoting its third annual conference entirely to this mushrooming field.

While universities throughout the country are producing Jewish feminist scholarship, few places receive these studies with unabashed enthusiasm.

"[We're] more open in the West, . . . willing to take more risks," says one conference organizer, Esther Fuchs, a professor of Jewish studies at the University of Arizona-Tuscon, where the conference took place in April.

The three-day gathering, which drew participants from many Western schools, was designed to look at subjects and places that had been marginalized: in Yiddish literature, in the Middle East, in German literature. But while the conference topics ranged widely, they all were interwoven with the adventures of Jewish women in the West in such sessions as "Soup, Soap, and Sermons: Texas Jewish Women Work to Solve Community Problems"; "Caroline, Hannah, and Mary: Jewish Women and the Legacy of the California Gold Rush"; and "All My Jewish Grandmothers: Four Generations in Cleveland and Omaha."

PHOTO COURTESY J. EDUARDO ROBINSON

It was Harriet Rochlin, however—the author of books about the Jews of Texas and author of "Riding High: Annie Oakley's Jewish Contemporaries," [LILITH, Fall/ Winter, 1985] —who dramatized these stories in her 80-image slide narrative that uses diaries, letters and memoirs to trace a vital female Jewish presence in the West from 1590 until 1912.

—*S.B.*

Josephine Sarah (Josie) Marcus (1861–1944). A native of San Francisco, she ran away with a theatrical troupe at 18 and spent 50 years roaming the West with her husband, one-time Tombstone sheriff Wyatt Earp.

The Skin Trade

Women of all shades, disciplines and universities were drawn this spring to Brandeis University to investigate "Skin Trade: Women, Complexion and Caste," a conference investigating the intersection of class, race and gender.

This many-layered project was put together and in large part funded by one passionate undergraduate, Jhana Howell, who is majoring in African and Afro-American studies, English and American Literature, and is also completing the Women's Studies Program at Brandeis.

Her hypothesis, with which the gathering was opened, is that color hierarchies—the granting or withholding of status based on skin tone—operate around the world, and not only in places where white imperialists imposed their law. Furthermore, Howell told the group, "We are here to focus on the experiences of women because it is an observable fact that men in many groups have greater chances of circumnavigating their race/ethnicity and color."

Panel discussions on history, politics, "ethnic erasure" and community included such topics as "Blackness, Whiteness and Cosmetics in Early Imperial Britain"; "Color-Coated, Color-Coded Lives: Experiences of a Multiracial, Multicultural, Working-Class Dyke"; and "The In-Between People: Jews in the U.S. and Color Hierarchies in Israel."

But while these subjects were topics for scholarly research and debate, they also spoke directly to the experiences of the participants. "It's something people are very aware of," said Howell about the participants' personal experiences with being "ranked" on the basis of their skin tone and other physical attributes by members of their own group. Howell describes the pain expressed by women about men who consistently choose light skin over dark in the black community, or blond over brunette in the Jewish. "If Jewish men and others are not interested in their own women, there's going to be a scramble for a small pool of women." And, she said, a lot of hostility and hurt between women as well.

—*S.B.*

For Jews, for Women, and for Yale

A group of enthusiastic student including former LILITH inter Sara Meirowitz, created national student conference on Jewis women's issues at Yale University th past spring. Student organizer Clai Sufrin, sends in this report:

The First National Stude Conference on Women and Judais held for four days at Yale University th spring, was just that: the first. And wi no precedent to follow, we didn't kno what to expect. Imagine our surpris when more than 250 applications mad their way throught the Hillel doors.

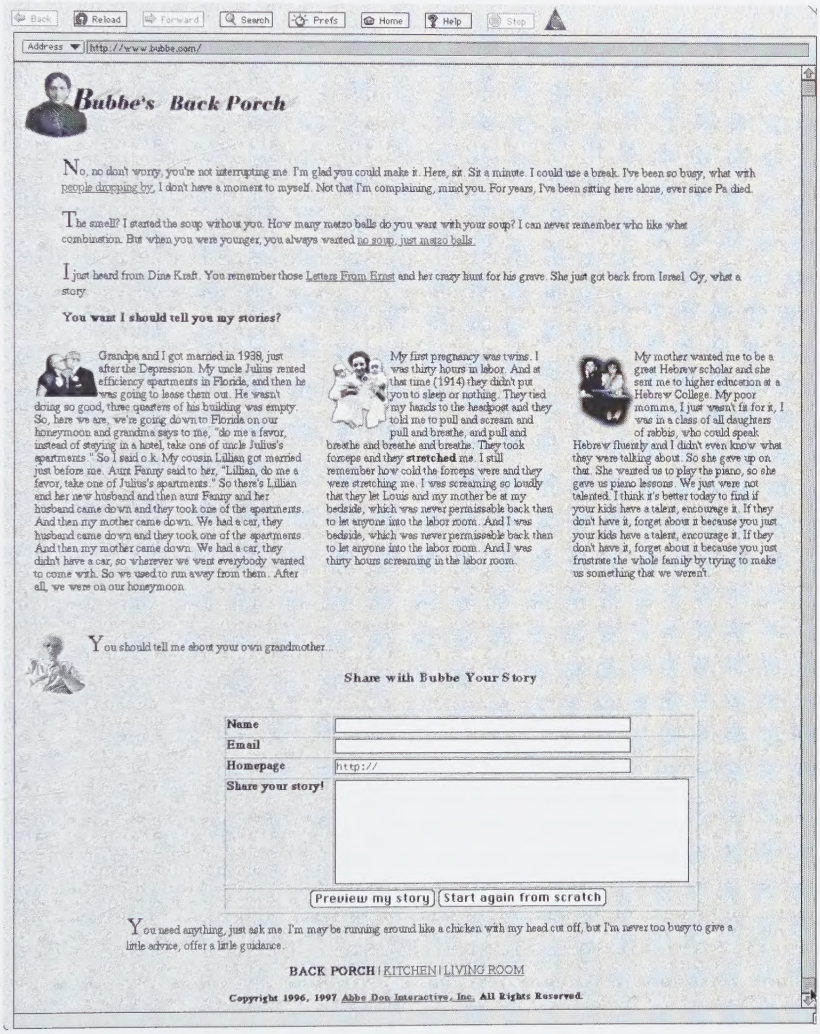
Avivah Zornberg (in from Jerusale for this conference!) kicked off th weekend. Quoting from *The Litt Prince* alongside midrash and Talmu Zornberg showed us the central role women in the liberation and Exodu from Egypt. Twenty-four seminars diverse subjects followed: text stud the Women of the Wall, Israeli women

Bubbe's Web

So you want I should tell you some stories?" Thus begins a visit to "Bubbe's Back Porch" (http://www.bubbe.com), a Web site created by artist and writer Abbe Don to celebrate that most precious of Jewish treasures, the bubbe. She is my bubbe, your bubbe, our bubbe, sitting in her kitchen while the soup simmers and the matzah balls cook, telling us about something she rarely speaks about: her life.

Bubbe's story is familiar: a Jewish immigrant woman who has devoted her life to her family and home. Most of us have a bubbe like her. But her story is not told often, or accorded the honor of written biography. This site resurrects a lost history, presenting the oral autobiography of a woman who represents a whole generation of unrecognized women.

The highlighted links on the site lead us through bubbe's life, occasionally offering links to sidetracks, like a collection of old letters or a list of English words that bubbe looks up in order to understand the news. In an excellent complement to the prose, "Bubbe's Back Porch" is illustrated with familiar graphics ranging from the front of a box of Manischewitz matzah meal to family photos.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Bubbe's Back Porch
No, no don't worry, you're not interrupting me. I'm glad you could make it. Here, sit. Sit a minute. I could use a break. I've been so busy, what with people dropping by. I don't have a moment to myself. Not that I'm complaining, mind you. For years, I've been sitting here alone, ever since Pa died.
The smell? I started the soup without you. How many matzo balls do you want with your soup? I can never remember who like what combination. But when you were younger, you always wanted no soup, just matzo balls.
I just heard from Dina Kraft. You remember those Letters From Ernst and her crazy hunt for his grave. She just got back from Israel. Oy, what a story.
You want I should tell you my stories?
Grandpa and I got married in 1938, just after the Depression. My uncle Julius rented efficiency apartments in Florida, and then he was going to lease them out. He wasn't doing so good, three quarters of his building was empty. So, here we are, we're going down to Florida on our honeymoon and grandma says to me, "do me a favor, instead of staying in a hotel, take one of uncle Julius's apartments." So I said o.k. My cousin Lillian got married just before me. Aunt Fanny said to her, "Lillian, do me a favor, take one of Julius's apartments." So there's Lillian and her new husband and then aunt Fanny and her husband came down and they took one of the apartments. And then my mother came down. We had a car, they husband came down and they took one of the apartments. And then my mother came down. We had a car, they didn't have a car, so wherever we went everybody wanted to come with. So we used to run away from them. After all, we were on our honeymoon.
My first pregnancy was twins. I was thirty hours in labor. And at that time (1914) they didn't put you to sleep or nothing. They tied my hands to the headpost and they told me to pull and scream and pull and breathe, and pull and breathe and breathe and breathe. They took forceps and they stretched me. I still remember how cold the forceps were and they were stretching me. I was screaming so loudly that they let Louis and my mother be at my bedside, which was never permissable back then to let anyone into the labor room. And I was bedside, which was never permissable back then to let anyone into the labor room. And I was thirty hours screaming in the labor room.
My mother wanted me to be a great Hebrew scholar and she sent me to higher education at a Hebrew College. My poor momma, I just wasn't fit for it, I was in a class of all daughters of rabbis, who could speak Hebrew fluently and I didn't even know what they were talking about. So she gave up on that. She wanted us to play the piano, so she gave us piano lessons. We just were not talented. I think it's better today to find if your kids have a talent, encourage it. If they don't have it, forget about it because you just frustrate the whole family by trying to make us something that we weren't.
You should tell me about your own grandmother...
Share with Bubbe Your Story
Name
Email
Homepage
http://
Share your story!
Preview my story
Start again from scratch
You need anything, just ask me. I'm may be running around like a chicken with my head cut off, but I'm never too busy to give a little advice, offer a little guidance.
BACK PORCH | KITCHEN | LIVING ROOM
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The Web format is excellent for this type of narrative, which unfolds as bubbe might tell it. Don, who describes herself has having "one foot firmly planted in the [computer] industry and another in the art world," immediately recognized the potential of the Web for a new kind of storytelling. While the general flow of bubbe's story is linear, Don's goal was to create what she calls "interactive fiction," a kind of post-modern storytelling inspired by her own great-grandmother's stories.

This site leaves room for more of these stories to be recorded. The bubbe of Don's imagination is not just a storyteller; she is also a listener. On the front page, after the introductions are complete, bubbe says, "You should tell me about your own grandmother." At the bottom of the page is a form for sending in a story of your own, which will then be posted on "Bubbe's Back Porch." Which is where bubbe's stories always have been—but now there are a whole lot of people listening.

—Melissa Weininger

iterature, sexuality and body image. This last incorporated movement exercises that invigorated the group and gave us a sense that we might contribute an innovation to the tradition of feminist conferences.

Questions of Jewish factionalism, so recently in the press, were raised gently in a discussion of women and prayer led by female rabbinical candidates and students from the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist movements. Later that day, feminist writer and activist Naomi Wolf provoked much discussion on the subject with her message about blurring boundaries and welcoming others into the Jewish community.

The entire weekend was punctuated with vigorous dancing and song. Shabbat ended with a beautiful *havdalah*—more than 200 women singing with their arms around each other. In the words of one of our panelists, "To empower yourself is a social responsibility." It is a responsibility that we felt ready to accept.

—Claire Sufrin

letters

Lilith welcomes letters to the editor, articles, fiction, poetry and memoirs. We reserve the right to edit letters for syntax and length.

Single Sex Schools

I was disappointed with the last line of the article: "Sex Segregated Schools—How Good Are They for Girls?" [Spring 1997] "The first step will be understanding that baking challah has no place in a discussion of the education of girls." With the current questions in our society regarding latch-key kids, and my own research into the decay of domestic religion, I found the last sentence to be indicative of "old school" feminism. Melissa Klapper, the educator being quoted, certainly does not say, in the previous sentence, what the author does in the last. And I am not advocating all our women return to the domestic realm full-time; I am an advocate of choice.

We need to teach our children some of everything so that they can make a valid choice for their lives, and so that they can appreciate what others do choose. Perhaps, the last sentence should read: "The first step will be understanding that baking challah has a place in a discussion of the education for both boys and girls. After all, does it matter who bakes the challah so long as someone makes it and the family sits down to enjoy it together?" We need to see that running the home is an important act, that need not be the domain of women.

Mara W. Cohen Ioannides
Springfield, MO

As a Jewish educator and writer with an active interest in gender issues, I found Sarah Blustain's article on sex-segregated schools fascinating reading. In my view, based on 17 years in the field of Jewish education, gender-separated schools are unnatural and undesirable. Such schools have done away with shared inquiry in the truest sense by limiting discussion and debate to only one gender. I appreciated Blustain's willingness to take a stand on sex-segregated schools, rather than simply present both sides of the issue.

And please–more articles by Muslim feminists! ["My Muslim Ancestor Hagar"] We need to dispel the erroneous notion that there are no progressives among Muslims.

Carmela Ingwer
New York, NY

Jerusalem's Awesome Women

Your otherwise interesting article on famous women who live(d) in Jerusalem [Spring 1997] contained a serious error in the segment about Henrietta Szold.

Szold was not, as your writers stated, the founder of Youth Aliyah. That distinction belongs to Recha Freier, a social worker and the wife of a rabbi, both of Berlin.

Let me quote the *Zionist Encyclopedia*'s listing about Freier and Youth Aliyah (Vol. 1, p. 361):

"Social Worker and originator of the idea of Youth Aliya. . . . Disturbed by the anti-Jewish discrimination in employment of the depression period, [she] conceived the idea of bringing young people and children in large groups to Palestine and arranging for their settlement in kibbutzim. Georg Landauer, a member of the Zionist Executive, suggested that she get in touch with Henrietta Szold, then director of the Department of Social Welfare of the Vaad L'Umi (National Council) in Jerusalem. Since Miss Szold's first reaction was negative, Mrs. Freier herself began to raise funds for her project and, on January 30, 1933, the day Hitler took office, established the Society for Youth Aliya in Berlin. In May 1933, she went to Palestine and persuaded Miss Szold to take charge of Youth Aliya.

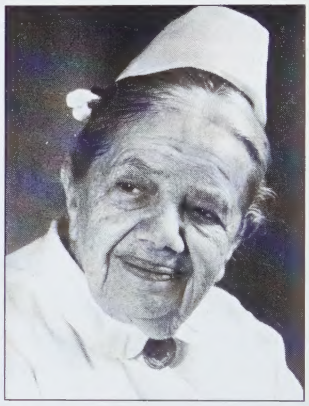
"Returning to Germany in July, Mrs. Freier, aided by Judische Jugendhilfe (Jewish Youth Aid), organized prospective Youth Aliya wards into groups, taught them Hebrew, and prepared them and their parents for the separation that lay ahead. She traveled to England and the Balkans to speed the departure of Jewish youths from Nazi-held lands. In 1941 she herself settled in Palestine, where she continued her education and social work for poor children. . . . She published *Let the Children Come: The Early History of Youth Aliya* (1961)."

Cordelia Cooper
New York, NY

Nechama Leibowitz (featured in "In Praise of Famous Women: A Walking or Armchair Tour of Jerusalem" Spring 1997) died in Jerusalem in April at the age of 92. Professor Leibowitz was one of the greatest biblical scholars in this century. She was a consummate juggler, tossing the text of the Hebrew Bible up in the air, and throwing against it all the great commentators from the past 2,000 years of history and beyond. She parsed, contrasted, explained, elucidated, drew sharp distinctions and formulated new hypotheses.

She lived in a society which rewarded women for being private, inside the house and pious, and she was pious and public and sharp. Her teachings crossed religious boundaries. Everyone was her student and all invited her to give lectures, and pored over her mimeographed sheets of wisdom. She was the mother of several generations of Bible scholars. Perhaps once in a century does someone bestow such richness upon society. May her name be blessed.

Susan Isserman
Manhattan, NY



This wonderful photo of Schwester Selma, who was featured in "Jersalem's Women," was sent to us by Shaarei Zedek Hospital—unfortunately too late to run in our Spring 1997 issue.

Resisting "Black or Jewish"

I thoroughly enjoyed reading "'Are You Black or Are You Jewish?' Resisting the Identity Challenge" (Fall 1996). It was a pleasure to read the stories of others like myself who proudly claim both Black and Jewish ancestry. "Resisting the Identity Challenge" is an apt way of phrasing the stance which many of us have adopted in our lives and from which we are forced to act on a regular basis.

(continued on page 41)

KISSES AND ASHES

Why would anyone wish herself back at Auschwitz?

a short story by Fredric Fastow

I have made arrangements so that no one will read this until after my death—and after my dear husband's death as well.

Fortunately my mind is clear, although my health is not the best but people live with sickness for years, don't they? So why shouldn't I? Must intelligent people curl up and withdraw from life just because they have to swallow pills and avoid stress?

You should have seen my family before we left. They were so concerned for me, so kind and solicitous on my behalf. What did they know? They nearly went without me.

"You can't leave me behind!" I remember arguing.

"But Mother, it might be too much for you, too strenuous for your heart."

"Too strenuous? Pif! I survived the camps as an inmate. Why shouldn't I survive them as a tourist?"

"We will be walking a great deal: you will tire. And it might upset you—the things we see, that is."

"I will pace myself. All things in moderation. Didn't Maimonides say that?"

"Plutarch," said my husband. My husband graduated from Harvard. He went there when it was difficult for Jews to get in.

We finally agreed that I could go if my husband came along. He was stronger than me; he could watch over me while the others absorbed Jewish history. He rearranged his business schedule.

They were right, of course. I should have stayed home. Whenever we sat down to make plans I felt sick to my stomach at the thought of going back to that horrible place. But I concealed my feelings. I had to go. I could not miss this opportunity.

Why is it that we survivors have become the darlings of the Jewish faith? Why are other Jews so interested in our reminiscences? Better they left us alone.

I know what it is. It is the inability of Jews to come to terms with the Holocaust. Every week I read another learned

"THE STRONGER VESSEL" BY MIRIAM SCHAPIRO. COURTESY OF STEINBAUM KRAUSS GALLERY, NEW YORK

essay on the subject in the Jewish press. We would all feel better if we could find some purpose in the Holocaust. Researchers are taking statements from everyone who lived through that time. What can they possibly learn? Do they think that if they write down enough oral histories, some conclusion will emerge from the sheer quantity of documentation?

Besides, I know the answer to their question. I am no historian, but look at the Greeks. Look at the Romans and the Spanish. A Jew could always save her life by renouncing her faith—except in Nazi Germany. Your Jewishness is not a garment; it is not something you can put on and take off. Your Jewishness is your integument; it is part of you. You cannot opt out of it. Really, you have no choice. You must study and practice your Jewishness. If you are going to be slaughtered, you will meet your fate with dignity if you can identify yourself. And if you are not facing death you are facing life. It's all the same.

This is the lesson of the Holocaust. The Nazis understood it. I cannot say the same for most of my Jewish friends.

I am sorry if I sound depressing. I told you my mind was clear.

So there we were, the whole family, back in that place, tourists all, putting ourselves into the picture. You should have seen them, soaking up the atmosphere like sponges, seeking to connect every feature of the place—every brick, every length of railroad track, every stretch of barbed wire—with some nuance of feeling.

How they wanted to do the right thing! They meant so well. What did they really understand? I don't know.

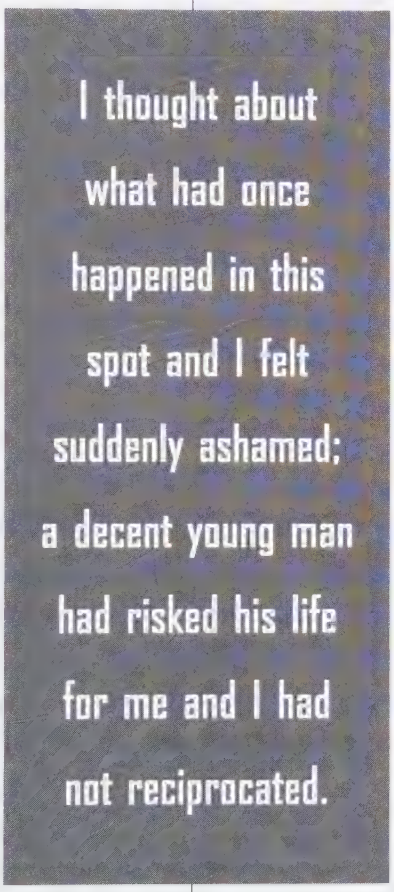
The most delicate part was getting away from them—from my family. But I knew the place. I knew it better than our guide did. I hung back and slipped away. Who says an old woman cannot be clever?

I was looking for the concealed spot behind the crematorium where I used to go and hide for a few minutes at a time. It was a dangerous act for which I might have been shot—but I was a young woman and sometimes it was necessary to avoid the guards.

The crematorium had not changed, only instead of avoiding guards I now hid from tourists.

I remembered how miserable we were as inmates. We were cold and starved and no one knew who would live for another day. People were brought in; people were sent away; they were degraded; they were shot and gassed. Things happened with no pretense of rationality. I could not help recalling a particular day when I was walking, going someplace, and I crossed paths with a certain young man and our eyes met. Nothing more. I didn't know his name or anything about him; I still don't. It was a ludicrous tableau, both of us ragged and scrawny. But his eyes were deep and they seemed to convey a message: "I know you; I know about you, your hopes and fears. Something exists between us." I say this now, with the benefit of hindsight. I do not think, at that moment, that I possessed the acuity to recognize anything.

Then one day my mother was shot; another day my brother disappeared. For a long time I was inconsolable and I didn't care about anything.


I thought about what had once happened in this spot and I felt suddenly ashamed; a decent young man had risked his life for me and I had not reciprocated.

One day as I stood in my hiding place I heard footsteps on the gravel. I felt instant terror.

It was the young man with the deep eyes. He came right up to me. I am afraid I drew back, but surely I was justified, as he had startled me so. In any case, I could not draw back very far, because I was already leaning against the wall of the crematorium.

"I know you," he said in a voice like a whisper. "I have been watching you. Your name is Sophie, isn't it?"

I nodded.

"Please excuse me," he continued. "I could not arrange for an introduction. What can any of us accomplish here? But I had to speak to you. You are the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. Please forgive me, I had to tell you that. Who knows what will happen next? I felt that I must create the occasion . . ."

"I don't understand," I said, "but if you go on talking they will find us and shoot us!"

He became silent but his eyes filled with such a look that I felt a vague apprehension entirely separate from my concern for my safety.

Then he grasped my arms, drew me toward him and kissed me. He covered my mouth with a passionate kiss, as though we were acting in a play. Can you imagine it? In spite of my surprise I remember thinking, "So that's it—even here; a man's foolish impulses, tactless and ill-timed." My apprehension melted away. A kiss. A trifle. A nothing.

He let me go, turned and slipped away, but not before he had whispered, "I hope we can meet again. Maybe we will live through this."

I never saw him after that. I few days later the Allies liberated us. The Germans acted like bad boys who had been caught stealing cookies. Their behavior was disgusting.

One American soldier was very kind to me. He shared his

rations with me. We talked and it turned out he was Jewish. Somehow we stayed in touch and eventually we married and he took me to America. We had children and prosperity; we had a Jewish household, a good marriage. As much as possible I forgot the past.

I had not thought of returning to Germany, to Poland; what Jew in her right mind would want to go there, and to tour the concentration camps, no less?

But when my children began to speak of it, I knew immediately that I must accompany them. Not only that, I insinuated myself into the planning.

So there I stood, years later, behind the crematorium, eyes closed, warmed by the sun. At first I would not admit to myself why I was there. "What a coincidence," I told myself.

But I knew I had only a few minutes. Soon the next tour would pass by and the guide—a pleasant fellow with long, blond hair—would spot me and call out, "Excuse me please, I must ask you to rejoin your group." I could not waste time playing games with myself.

I thought about what had once happened in this spot and I felt suddenly ashamed; a decent young man had risked his life for me and I had not reciprocated. I had given him no sign, no word of kindness, nothing in return. What would it have cost me? A word? A smile? A kiss? A nothing.

One thought led to another. In my mind's eye I saw myself, living my life in America, my secure, happy life, while a most important matter remained unresolved in Germany. I did not, as I said, know what had become of the young man. But it was not unrealistic to suppose that he survived our ordeal; it was not impossible that he remembered me. And if he remembered me, perhaps he still retained his interest in me. Surely he understood that my reticence that day was due not to personal dislike but only to the exigencies of our situation and the unexpected manner of his approach and what, in light of that understanding, might he do? Might he not, from time to time, return to this place, the place of our first meeting?

Might he not return today? Wasn't that possible—or at least not impossible? Wouldn't it be a charming coincidence? Might we not exchange a few words before my family began to wonder where I was?

Of course it was possible. Once you have lived through the Holocaust anything is possible.

"Where is he?" I asked myself. "We should have become acquainted. We should have fallen in love; we were meant to be lovers."

In my imagination I saw us meeting, smiling, embracing; I was saying, "My beautiful boy, my sweet, sweet lover, we shall finally set everything right," when I was startled by the sound of footsteps on gravel. It was only my husband, my dear husband, who had for 20 minutes been trying to find me.

"How did you get here?" he asked. "We were so anxious. You know how concerned we were about you, coming here."

"I'm all right, " I answered. "I only wanted to be by myself."

Such a fuss they made over me! It was all unnecessary.

On the airplane we talked and rested. Someone distributed food on trays. I ate most of my meal and then I came to the dessert, which was a dish of yellow custard. For some reason the custard held my attention. I realized that I had been staring at it for many minutes. "In the camp," I thought, "we never saw food like this."

But that was not it. The custard was only a key, I don't know why. What I was really doing was trying to strike a bargain with God. "God," I was saying, "Creator of the Universe, can't we be united again, my beautiful sweet boy and I? Can't You arrange it somehow? It would be so easy for You. Perhaps, God, You could send me back *there*—perhaps You could return me to *that* time—and he would be waiting for me and I would see him once more and properly return his affections."

The thought was out. Who can control a thought, however unspeakable? I cried out in the airplane, "God, Lord of the World, I revoke my wish! No one could desire that—not for anything in the world!"

It was too late; I no longer knew what I wanted. I began to cry. I cried and cried and cried, floods of tears. My hand fell into the custard; people stared; I felt so terribly, terribly ashamed.

My husband, my dear considerate husband, leaned over me and said anxiously, "Sophie, Sophie, you must calm down. Remember your heart."

My husband, the poor man—he was so kind and understanding. I snapped at him, "What do you know about hearts?" And the tears would not stop. ■

Fredric Fastow is a lawyer and architect, and plays Jewish music on classical guitar.

Move Over, Martha Stewart

A Jewish Bridal Shower

By Ilana Trachtman

When my dear friend Diane Lasken got engaged, I was thrilled. When she asked me to be the maid of honor, I was touched. When I thought about throwing her a shower, I was bewildered. Let me explain: Diane and I are twenty-something Jewish feminists.

If we were a little less "ethnic," and more, say, interested in "wearing pastel," I might have hit the wedding section of my local bookstore. Within the hydrangea-flourishing covers of Memorable Weddings, I could have learned all that I ever wanted to know about color schemes and garden herbs appropriate for pre-nuptial teas. But Diane is a Jewish family educator at a Conservative synagogue in Boston, and I, a producer of educational TV in New York City, am no Martha Stewart.

So, too young and funky for Emily Post, too kooky for Anita Diamant's *New Jewish Wedding,* too Jewish for Brides magazine, I was on my own in figuring out how to throw a shower. I wanted the event to reflect Diane's enthusiasm for Judaism, but I didn't want to alienate her less (and non-) religious family and friends.

With a little help from Diane's enlightened bridesmaids (one a Jewish educator, another a financial analyst), I finally cobbled together an idea: A *Mitzvah* Shower. I found a useful source, *The Concise Book of Mitzvot* compiled by Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaCohen, also known as the Chafetz Chayim (Feldheim, 1990), that lists all 613 Jewish commandments, and I also discovered an online service (go to any search engine and type in "613 *mitzvot*") that inventories all the *mitzvot*. Citing biblical chapter and verse for each commandment, I strategically paired up *mitzvot* and guests.

The homework I mailed out with the shower invitations was simple: Give Diane a gift based on your assigned *mitzvah*. All together there were 35 guests and 20 *mitzvot* (some of the commandments seemed so promising and/or suggestive and/or germinal that I couldn't bear to assign them only once). I gave the more obvious *mitzvot* to people who I thought would have less energy to be challenged, and the less obvious *mitzvot* to those with a better Jewish background or a particularly clever turn of mind.

I expected to receive some baffled phone calls from resistant guests (like, "Huh? What's this—"Guard your tongue," Leviticus 25:17??? I always give crystal bowls at bridal showers!"), but instead the few calls I got were from intrigued invitees wanting to know more about their assigned *mitzvah.* People got into it and were very creative.

At the shower, gifts to the bride included dishes in a bold Ikea pattern (for "Keep kosher," Exodus 23:19); a challah cover (for "Remember the Sabbath," Exodus 20:10); and a stunning bird feeder (for *"Tzar baalei chayim,"* "Be kind to living creatures"). One "mother's friend" gave Diane an alarm clock and Q-tips ("Hear the shofar on Rosh HaShanah," Numbers 29:1) with the rabbinic-like explication that "you might miss hearing the shofar if you oversleep, or if your ears are clogged."

"Welcoming guests" (*"Hachnasat Orchim,"* Genesis 18:2) was a *mitzvah* I gave out to two invitees. Diane received guests towels from one of them, and a pitcher and glasses set from the other. For *"Shmirat halashon"* ("Guarding your tongue from gossip," Leviticus 25:17), a friend gave the bride a book of inspirational readings, meant, she explained, "to redirect your thoughts when they're headed in the wrong direction."

Other great gifts included candles in the shape of moons (in relation to the *mitzvah* of "Keeping the new month holy") and a donation to a City Harvest group (for the injunction to give charity, Deuteronomy 15:11).

One of the gifts that came with a few small strings attached was from—who else?—the bride's mother. The *mitzvah* was "Settle the land of Israel" (Numbers 33:53), and Diane opened a box that turned out to hold a set of miniaturized luggage. "I know you're planning to go to Israel next year," explained the bride's mother, "but this luggage set won't fit very much—so you won't be able to stay away too long."

Besides the 35 individual gifts that Diane received, I also wanted to orchestrate a heartfelt communal gift to her—from all of the assembled shower guests—which expressed our love for her and our wishes for her to have a happy marriage. And so, while we awaited Diane's arrival at the shower, I gave each guest a fabric leaf (I cut them out from green gingham) and asked everyone to write a sentence of "marriage advice" to Diane. We glued each leaf on to a fabric tree trunk that I had made (matching Diane's kitchen colors). Our leafy *bons mots* ranged from "Take lots of bubble baths," to "Never go to bed angry" and "Remember forgiveness." Diane seemed delighted with all of our gifts.

For pure fun, I definitely recommend that women of all ages dress each other in toilet paper on a Saturday night.

I must confess that I did borrow one game from a bridal magazine which turned out to be extremely funny: the toilet paper wedding dress game. Forming three teams of 10 women each, the teams each anointed one of its members as "bride to be" and had three minutes in which to design the "Most Stunning Wedding Dress" out of toilet paper. Diane served as judge. For pure fun, I definitely recommend women of all ages dressing each other in toilet paper on a Saturday night. We also asked Diane questions about her courtship that her fiancé had answered earlier. This turned out to be an instructional exercise proving that two do not become one—they stay two!

The *Mitzvah* Shower was a success. Diane's Grandma was there, attending her umpteenth shower. Attending her first shower was Diane's young cousin Julie, who had just celebrated her bat mitzvah. And then there were the rest of us *mitzvah* girls in between. We gorged on dessert, catered potluck-style. We ate, we laughed, and we learned a little about Judaism, each other, and marriage.

And, by the definition of any culture's mores or wedding-planning book, we unquestionably fulfilled the fundamental *mitzvah* at the root of our all-female evening: We entertained the bride. ■

Ilana Trachtman is a 26-year-old children's television producer in New York City.

Want to throw a Mitzvah Shower too? Both the bride (617-861-0300) and the author (212-977-9100) are happy to share their experiences with LILITH readers. ■

RA METZ—UNITE

You Are What You Wear

By Sarah Wildman

Take off your clothes. A random sampling of your garment labels probably reads: Made in Honduras, Manufactured in Vietnam, Assembled in Macao. In buying and washing our shirts and jeans, nightgowns and we rarely notice these words.

But behind these tiny tags is the complex story of Third World economies in which the welfare of employees is routinely sacrificed on the altar of profit. In developing countries around the world women and girls, in sweatshops reminiscent of those a century ago, work endless days in dark rooms for below-subsistence pay, sometimes sexually abused by their employers, sometimes fired when they become pregnant.

These conditions, which taint products in many of our most popular stores, have become the cause celebre of activists, union representatives, and government officials—who together have tried to exert pressure on companies to comply with humane employment standards. But those involved all agree that the critical force in fostering this change will be the conscience of the informed consumer.

"Sweatshops have been with us since time immemorial. It is critically important for the health and safety of workers that our community—particularly women—pay attention to what they buy and where it was made," says Manahattan borough president and New York City mayoral candidate Ruth Messinger.

In the past three years, the Department of Labor and a contingent of nongovernmental organizations—women's organizations, labor committees, Jewish philanthropies—have brought a new anti-sweatshop campaign into the public eye. Like the first wave of the labor movement at the early part of this century, Jews—and especially Jewish women—are coming forward to speak out against the unethical labor practices under which much ready-to-wear clothing is produced. In April, a group of religious leaders, human rights activists, and union organizers assembled at the White House with their historic adversaries in the garment industry to support the Apparel Industry Partnership, a project intended to take the first steps in restricting sweatshop abuses.

The clothing industry was built on the backs of laborers with no options.

The Apparel Industry Partnership's new "code of conduct" is clear and uncomplicated. The code requires workers to be at least 15 years old, to work no more than a 60-hour week, and to receive no less than minimum wage. Additionally, the code forbids all forced labor, abuse and discrimination and requires employers to provid healthy work environments and the right to bargain collectively. Manufacturers and retailers who comply will be allowed to label their goods "sweat- and child-labor-free."

Linda Golodner, co-chair of the partnership and president of the National Consumer's League, stressed the uniqueness of this melding. "This is the first time this has ever occurred," Golodner said, noting the key inclusion of industry representatives in the agreement.

"All of us with a stake in this industry, a stake in the new global economy, a stake in our democratic way of life, have found common ground and mapped out a route to dignity and respect in the workplace," pronounced Jay Mazur, president of U.N.I.T.E.—the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (the merger of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union).

"SWEAT-FREE" ENFORCEMENT

However well mapped out, the route is clearly not well paved. First World retail companies, struggling to keep up with constantly shifting consumer desires and cost-cutting retailers, hire manufacturers in "Third World" countries where work is cheap. Each country has its own story of horror. According to dispatches from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Salvadoran workers "find themselves in worse conditions than before industrialization." Their counterparts in Sri Lanka "live like animals in makeshift huts that house up to 60 workers, without any sanitary installations."

Indeed, the task of monitoring the standards of such an industry is overwhelming. The controls imposed by labor advocates like the unions and the United States Department of Labor—which break down even in such urban manufacturing areas as New York's Chinatown—are entirely meaningless outside American borders. Not only are companies free from the humanitarian labor laws in the United States: they are also far from the watchful cameras of the media, and the subsequent heightened consumer-consciousness.

Furthermore, many questions about the code itself arise. For instance, who determines what a "minimum" wage shall be? Who chooses the monitors of human rights? Governments? Clergy? The companies themselves? As the accords stand right now, monitors will be hired by companies to watch over their own factories.

Such factors have led the National Labor Committee, which applauded the accord, to temper its praise. "[It] needs to be strengthened in a really profound way in order to make sense," said spokeswoman Ellen Braune, pointing to ambiuous definitions in the accord of such terms as "independent monitoring" and "living wage."

Even labor issues that consumers might directly act on—for example, finding out which manufacturers support the code of conduct and then buying their goods—are less straightforward than one might assume. Nike, Inc., for instance, has participated in "No Sweat" meetings since early last summer, yet in the February 1997 issue of Free Labor World, a London-based newspaper published by the ICFTU, Nike was blasted for farming out its manufacturing to subcontractors in notoriously non-democratic and anti-union countries. Questioned, Nike's response was, "We're just buyers; we don't control what goes on in the factories." Now Nike has signed on to the code of conduct. Now we, as consumers, can watch for the impact of Nike's latest switch.

The key, of course, is consumer response—how *we* react at Bloomingdale's or Baby Gap. Activists in the 1970s and 1980s created in the American mind a compelling link between grapes and the suffering of farmworkers in the Southwest and in Central and South America, inspiring a national consumer boycott and an industry response. Likewise must the American public respond now: If Nike knows its consumers will not buy goods produced by sweatshop labor, they are likelier to change working conditions.

The ready-to-wear clothing industry, an innovation of the 19th century, was built on the backs of laborers with no options. With no "homeland" to which they could return, the daughters of Russian and Eastern European immigrants worked in tiny, ill-lit and poorly ventilated rooms. Fire escapes and windows were locked to prevent workers from taking "illegal" breaks. More than 80 years later, similar working conditions have been reported in Thailand, El Salvador, and even Los Angeles.

Eighty years ago, Jewish immigrant women, incensed by the intolerable conditions and influenced by the socialism they learned in the Old World, demanded *mentshlekhe bahndlung* (humane treatment), staged walk-outs and courted unions. Today, while workers in similar situations have little presence in the American arena, the organizations that supported workers then, including the National Council of Jewish Women and the Women's City Club of New York, continue in the public battle on their behalf.

We need to change the *consumer's* consciousness whether at Bradlee's or Baby Gap.

In 1993, the Department of Labor launched the "No Sweat" initiative enlisting all members of the garment industry. The DOL had discovered that though it had hundreds of enforcement agents, they were virtually impotent without the compliance of the retailers and manufacturers. A three-pronged approach was implemented: enforcement of labor laws, public acknowledgment of complying companies as what they termed "trendsetters," and public education, an initiative that many Jewish and labor organizations have tapped into. The image has flipped: Descendants of turn-of-the-century garment workers are now the consumers rather than laborers, perhaps in a better position to improve the worker's lot.

But while the DOL's tagging of "trendsetters" may provide some guide to the consumer, even these companies must constantly be reevaluated. This Spring Guess Inc., a Los Angeles-based clothing company and former trendsetter, was placed on probation by the Department of Labor for sub-par monitoring practices. UNITE estimates that approximately

3,000 workers were toiling for Guess in "filthy, cramped, [and] overheated" shops where workers were not paid minimum wage. Guess has made public motions toward ameliorating the situation after student and church groups demanded a boycott of their products.

In 1996, the sweatshop issue was pushed into public discourse with the "outing" of the clothing line endorsed by morning talk-show host Kathie Lee Gifford. After discovering her clothing line was partially produced in a Honduran plant accused of labor violations, Gifford took to the stump, declaring that abolishing sweatshops is "nothing less than critical for the entire garment industry."

Volunteers take to the streets, asking store owners how their merchandise is made.

In the fall of 1996, concerned groups pushed to educate consumers about unethical labor practices in the garment industry. Organized by the National Council of Jewish Women, a coalition of labor and women's groups began working with New York State and federal officials to force sweatshops into daily discourse. In March, a "No Sweatshopping Day" had volunteers fanning out up Manhattan's East Side armed with "care tags" and a script, asking store owners if they keep tabs on how their merchandise is created. Though the sponsors were heavily sprinkled with Jewish affiliates, including the American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Jewish Labor Committee, NCJW, they declared it a universal cause. "Caring for our fellow woman and man is a Jewish ethic, [as is the importance of] creating a community with none who are oppressed," said Roberta Pincus, past president of the NCJW.

Lois Waldman, director of the Commission for Women's Equality at the American Jewish Congress, points out that simultaneously AJCongress was pressing its members to exercise their rights by bringing up these issues at annual stockholders meetings. "Stockholders asking for action is a device which gets corporate management to respond while publicizing issues of concern," she said.

This fall the National Labor Committee is sponsoring a national "day of conscience." On Saturnday, October 4, cities around the country will host vigils, street theater and letter-writing campaigns in an effort of mass public education.

The stickier layer of the issue is in the worldwide cultural differences that this crusade touches upon. Protesting human rights violations connects to a Westernized moral code that is culturally and class specific. But in many of these countries, such treatment of workers is the standard and may be viewed, even by the workers themselves, as unremarkable. Addressing the sweatshop issue isolates only a small part of a more complex problem.

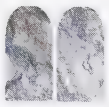
The Apparel Industry Partnership is an important step in both publicizing and politicizing the issue. Consumers must approach their purchasing power as exactly that, a power that can be wielded with force.

"A woman called me the other day asking if L.L.Bean was a member of the partnership," said Linda Golodner, relating a tale of proactive consumerism. "She and her husband are older and it's easier for them to shop through catalogues. She wanted to be sure that she could support the company." Golodner was happy to tell her that L.L. Bean is, in fact a Department of Labor "trendsetter." Happy because consumers like these are, finally, the key players in the Apparel Industry Partnership. ■

Sarah Wildman is a freelance writer living in Washington, D.C.

For further information

- The Department of Labor's home page: http://www.dol.gov. A link to "No Sweat" takes you to options including Shopping Clues, Fashion Trendsetters, Garment Enforcement Reports and public service announcements.
- UNITE, Steve Nutter (213)830-5498; Christina Vasquez or Jo-Ann Mort (212)686-4551
- For a list of No Sweat retailers and manufacturers, write to NO SWEAT, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210; fax (202)219-8740.
- For an extensive bibliography on the Jewish labor movement (and women's roles), send a SASE with two 32-cent stamps to the Jewish Labor Committee, 25 E. 21st St., New York, NY 10010
- National Labor Committee Charles Kernaghan (212)242-0986
- Employment Standards Administration (202)219-8743
- National Consumers League, 1701 K St., NW, #1200, Washington, DC 20006 (202)835-3323



Women Find Those Extra Commandments God's Been Keeping in Her Back Pocket

Introduction by Susan Schnur

A FEW YEARS AGO I WAS AT A FEMINIST CONFERENCE in which a woman stood up enraged. Why wasn't there a forum at the conference for Jewish-Buddhist single mothers with adopted biracial children???—she demanded to know. I burst out in a laughing spell that left me refreshed for days. Diversity had outdone itself, had drowned in narcissism.

The next week, however, I was at a second conference—an all-purpose, pre-sifted conventional Jewish one—in which every presenter was male, middle-aged, Ashkenazic, Conservative- and/or Orthodox-identified, and heterosexual. Where was the Jewish-Buddhist single mother of the adopted biracial child now that we really needed her?, I wondered. This second conference—monochromatic and sociologically fundamentalist—depressed me for days.

We need canon *plus* tincture-of-girl.

On the following pages, LILITH strives to find a middle ground. In the midst of polarized American "culture wars" (as well as polarized Israeli "religion wars"), Jewish women need to strengthen mature feminist models who stay the *goldeneh* mean, who respect both tradition and contemporary self and are committed to integrating them, who offer canon *plus* tincture-of-girl.

In the first essay that follows, **Deena Metzger,** in celebration of her 60th birthday, goes on a spiritual pilgrimage to Mount Sinai—ascending the mountain with 10 Commandments, but descending with 11 (retrieving one from God's back pocket). In the second essay, **Nancy Maxwell** is an exhausted working Mom (and Reconstructionist Jew) who realizes how desperately she needs a Sabbath to reconstitute her lifestyle-trapped *oysge-matert* self. Crying over her laundry one day, she raids God's back pocket, returning with "Nancy Maxwell's Save-Your-Own Life Shabbat Rules." Her commandments include not only received religious tradition ("NO shopping," "NO guilt-induced phone calls," "YES to swimming at the Y"). And **Malka Drucker** shows, in her terse but majestic liturgical rewrite, how to truly *be* in that creative tension that synthesizes both traditional Judaism and feminism. Drucker coaxes the feminine all the way out of the belly of the Sh'ma.

And so the questions raised for Jewish women are: What do *we* need to add to Judaism in order to really live it? What's *our* Sabbath? Our Rosh HaShana? Our bat mitzvah? Our rite of passage? Our time to light candles? Our escape? Our institution? Our detail? Our alteration that gives Judaism back its transformative power?

The Jewish commentator, Or Ha-Hamah, wrote that "whoever creates new interpretations of Torah, harvests Her."

In the following pages, three Jewish women head out to their new harvest.

The 11th Commandment Brought down from Sinai

by Deena Metzger

After a year of private ritual preparation, I return to Mount Sinai to celebrate my 60th birthday. Of course, I hope for a vision. This journey has been carefully orchestrated so that my husband, Michael Ortiz Hill, and I will climb the mountain in order to be at the top on the 22nd of September, the Autumn Equinox, also Yom Kippur.

I climbed this mountain in 1980—17 years ago—entering from the Israeli side and driving across pristine wadis (despoiled only by the occasional rusting tank) to the place where we would begin the ascent some hours after midnight in order to be at the summit of Mount Sinai at dawn. When the sun broke across the horizon, piercing the clouds with its brilliant light, our little band of pilgrims, 30 or so strong, stood together in silent awe, and then a few Bavarian women broke into song.

In those days there was nothing at the foot of the mountain but the monastery of Santa Katerina, ancient home to Greek Orthodox monks. Now, however, with the Sinai Peninsula returned to Egypt, a bustling village has grown up at the base, and hotels and apartment complexes have been thrown up rapidly. Mount Sinai is a boom town.

Litter gathers in windswept eddies across streets and bare ground. From my hotel window I look out at construction sites—small settlements, power plants and oasis all fenced in. The desert is rapidly disappearing into islands of concrete, the Bedouin dispossessed, the animals (like animals everywhere) exiled with nowhere to go.

Still, the light is brilliant. Dazzling. The stones of the mountains gather the yellow light into themselves and thrust it back toward the sky, a study in blue and gold. Wind twisting in a dust devil moves across the sand and gathers two plastic bags, one black, one white, into its swirl so that they dance about each other high in the air, edges touching, graceful as two birds spinning wing to wing on the whirling currents.

So much preparation and the invocation of many gods has preceded my pilgrimage. Entering from Egypt this time, I was thinking about those ancient deities so long abandoned whose mystical teachings, which may surpass anything we know in our lives, have almost vanished. This desert is the domain of the "neter" or the god Set, the destroyer, the principle of dryness and fire who wars perpetually with Horus, the solar principle, the son of the green god Osiris who became the black god (or "neter") of the Under {*nether*} world. Between these two Egyptian gods, Set and Horus, is the great goddess Isis—the life force, creativity and cosmic waters—who sustains the eternal tension between permanence (Set) and fertility (Horus).

Moses came out of this world, was most probably an adept of the Egyptian Mysteries and so was walking in at least two profound spiritual traditions when he climbed Mount Sinai, the Mountain of the Moon (the word *sin*) in order to meet the One.

The moon will be full when I am here. The moon takes me to Hekate—Egyptian Hekate, frog goddess of midwives—mediator between the worlds, lunar goddess of occult knowledge, childbirth and death. Hekate of the tri-via—of the three ways (maiden, mother, crone), of the crossroads. Her meeting place is wherever three roads intersect. The offerings one brings to this ancient one are the scraps from one's table, garbage, compost, the stuff of decomposition and regeneration.

"My prayers are not those I expect to utter. I can only think of the way we dishonor the earth and so I pray for wolves, elephants, camels frogs, salmon, squirrels, even mosquitoes."

While I am packing, some hours before we are to leave to climb Mount Sinai, Michael is fighting mosquitoes, reminding me of Sister Cao Ngoc Phuong periodically slapping at mosquitoes as we sat under an oak in Ojai, Calif., listening to a dharma talk by the Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh. Is it permissible to kill mosquitoes? How God tests us, I think.

Just after midnight, Michael and I are delivered by taxi to the outskirts of Santa Katerina. Passing us on the road are scores of Bedouin men more wrapped than dressed in cotton against the sand and night, riding upon or leading camels in silent waves out of and into the darkness. "Camel? Camel?" they call, offering to take us up to the summit. They offer this service every night of the year. We refuse, though our packs, Michael's especially, are extremely heavy as we are planning to spend three days at the summit. Having come so far to climb the mountain, I will not refuse the ordeal. A great star rises in the east and accompanies us as we go.

Soon after we begin our climb, others come up behind us. Ten, 20, 30, 60, 100, 200 more file past, walking or on camels. Apparently, every night is like this. As I try to find my way on the uneven stones, I spy abandoned plastic water bottles, candy wrappers, cigarette butts, plastic bags, bottle caps, toilet tissues, human waste, a constant rain of debris from those who think nothing of befouling the site they have traveled so far to see.

Given the traffic, I should not be shocked by the presence of a cafe three-quarters of the way up from the desert floor. Here the camels stop and the ordeal of the steps begins. Having succumbed gratefully to the temptation of mango juice, tea and a chocolate bar, I pick up the accumulation of soda bottles, wrappers and plastic strewn across the courtyard. Then I thank the impoverished Bedouin shopkeeper in tattered clothes who smiles at me through ravaged teeth.

Refreshed, Michael and I start up the steep and irregular rocks set as stairs and come upon a group of Japanese travelers, descending in single file in the dark, holding flashlights like candles and singing "Amazing Grace." As we pass a hovel of metal and stones that gives no sign that it is fit for human habitation, a plaintive and ecstatic melody of morning prayer emerges like radiance from a stone, like a rose out of compost, like the first emanation of beauty out of the abyss.

What a blessing it is to hear these sounds of prayers! We leave the path and sit down in meditation, enraptured by the harmony of sacred song. The solemn hymns of the Japanese tourists descend to meet the ascending chants of the Muslim prayers. This is a holy moment. Perhaps only such a cry can open the gates of Heaven.

At dawn, we reach the small summit. A very large crowd has gathered to watch the coming of day. People shake themselves out of sleeping bags thrown about everywhere, including the courtyard of a tiny church and the space surrounding another refreshment stand. Tourists swarm over the surrounding stones, all waiting for light. Now the glorious emergence of the sun across the range of forbidding mountains, great granite waves peaking, is greeted by excited chatter and camera-clicking as now this and now that tourist places herself, himself before the angle of the light in order to be captured perfectly.

A young Japanese woman places herself directly in front of my view, smiling into the camera as if to say, "Look at me. I am here!" How appropriate that this woman's triumph coincides with the advent of the rising sun, Amaterasu, the ancient sun goddess enclosed in a mirror in a box in a cabinet in the center of a Temple in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Confused, disappointed, Michael and I wander off toward the west where, following a search for a secluded spot, we find a circle of stones. After cleaning up the site, we spend several hours in prayer and meditation, painfully aware that our sanctuary might at any moment be overtaken by others. My prayers are not those I expect to utter after having traveled halfway across the earth for this moment! But I can only think of the way we dishonor and despoil earth and so I pray for wolves, elephants, rhinos, camels, frogs, salmon, squirrels, tigers, turtles, bears, eagles, dolphin, whales. As I call out for the protection of all the creatures, the words come to me, "protect even the mosquito."

By mid-afternoon we hear voices again and decide not to add to the gathering crowd. We will descend rather than spending the next two days here as planned. Angling back toward the summit I come upon the Ten Commandments awkwardly scrawled on a piece of torn cardboard attached to the iron staves fencing the church. By this time, I am so anguished by the garbage and litter that I deface the sign by adding an 11th commandment:

"Thou shalt not litter or deface the Holy Mountain."

I am tenderly aware of the sincerity of the person, a man I presume, who lettered this simple sign. Perhaps he is the priest of this small church. Reverence, certainly, has led him to remind us of the holiness of the site, and yet I choose to deface his inscription by adding another commandment—even though I had no intention of bringing down from Mount Sinai any law. But I have climbed the Mountain and I have heard another commandment and I can't ignore this. Even if it has not come from God—unless God is within us.

This commandment has confronted me since I came to Egypt and stood at the head of the Sphinx, looking out across the littered sand to Pizza Hut and Kentucky Fried Chicken at the entrance to the pyramids. This commandment is part of a history of teachings "received." It is the injunction that grabbed me two years ago when I had come to the bedside of my dear friend Morena Monteforte in the haven she had made for herself in Tepostlan, Mexico, and I was compelled to spend the afternoon clearing litter, as best I could, from the public meadow and stream outside her house—my offering to Hekate, the crone, she who decays, she who loves offerings of garbage. Such was my prayer for Morena who was dying.

By five in the afternoon I am lying down in the tidy whitewashed bedroom of the Daniella hotel. A mosquito buzzes around my head. Not any mosquito this time but the one which appears after I prayed for all creatures. Now that we have closed the window so no more mosquitoes can enter (or exit) and we have scented ourselves with repellent, I am preoccupied by this lone mosquito who requires blood to fulfill her life cycle and who is trapped in a room with two humans she can't approach. We have become her unique form of torture and hell as she is ours. I do not kill the mosquito.

The sound of prayer, the chant of the *muezzin,* pervades the town from the mosque. Despite the insects, I open the door and see a golden light gilding the tops of the mountains which are otherwise a dull brown. I am grateful that dawn and twilight bring this adornment of light.

But I am not thinking about light or law or beauty or

What? No Garbage Cans?

Is your cucumber bitter?—Throw it away. Are there briars in your path?—Turn aside. That is enough. Do not dwell on the thought, "Why have such things been brought into the world?" A person of true wisdom would only laugh at you, just as a carpenter would laugh at you if you if you found fault with the shavings lying about his shop. The carpenter, at least, has a place to throw out his scraps; yet Nature has no such place ouside Herself. And this is the miracle of Her workmanship; though limited to Herself, She takes back everything that is old, worn out, and useless: and from within Herself, brings forth a new creation. She requires neither a substance outside Herself, nor a place to discard the waste: Her own space, her own material, and Her own workmanship is sufficient unto Her.

—Marcus Aurelius, 2nd Century

spirit. This is what I am thinking: We are at the garbage heap of history. The businessman in *The Graduate* proclaiming "plastics" is our prophet. This is who we are; our excrement is visible, displayed, preserved. Without self-awareness we have come to serve Set, the destroyer, who by his nature, as principle of dryness, is unchanging, preserving all things. The god of what is unchanging against the gods of that which changes, lives and dies. This Set has become our only god. Because we do not wish to worship other gods, we turn our backs on those deities who guard the cycles of life, and we bring our indestructible offerings of plastic and refuse to this holy ground.

At Sinai, as at the Sphinx, as at the Great Pyramid of Cheops at Giza, wherever I look I am confronted by litter, refuse, excrement, debris, offal, graffiti. A constant reiteration: Here we are. This is our mark. These mirrors reflect our faces. These are the artifacts of our beliefs and great ideas. These signs confirm that we walk in the world as if we have conjured a virtual reality that can be swept clean by pressing a delete button.

"Though I am at the top of Mount Sinai, I am not thinking about light or law or beauty or spirit. This is what I am thinking: We are at the garbage heap of history."

I had hopes for a vision and I found it, but it is not the vision I imagined. Four years before the millennium, the vision I come upon at Mount Sinai is of garbage and mosquitoes.

If this is the vision, what can the creed (or commandments) of a new vision or religion be other than this: Protect the lives of all creatures. Spend a good portion of your hours each day picking up garbage. Avoid plastics. Live so that you and your belongings return to the Source. Take nothing from the Mountain or the Mother that cannot be returned to the Mountain and the Mother.

Before we had climbed the mountain, I bought juice from a shopkeeper and asked him, not seeing any receptacles for refuse on the street, if he would mind throwing away my empty container. He thanked me profusely and spoke of his disgust with the litter in the streets and the fate of the foxes in the desert where the garbage, when collected, is dumped without being buried.

It is now 5 a.m., and I decide, as Michael and I finish packing our suitcases, to run over to that little shop and slip 360 Egyptian pounds [20 x 18—*chai*, meaning life] under the door. I write a note asking the shopkeeper if he would, no matter what else he does with the money, create two signs: One for the foot and the other for the summit of Mount Sinai which will say, "Please do not deface or litter the Holy Mountain. Carry all debris out with you."

The taxi comes. As we enter the car, these is an eclipse of the moon. It is getting darker despite the dawn. The earth deflects the light of the sun. From the mosque, we hear the sound of prayers reaching up to the sky. The birds are still silent but the mosquitoes hum. We are in a passage between the worlds: this is Hekate's domain! I repeat my prayers of the mountain as quickly as I can.

We drive away, but for all I know something may transpire, in this dark passage, to bring us back from the clutches of Set into the mysteries of the living world.

Deena Metzger is a novelist, poet, playwright, and essayist. She is also a lay analyst, healer, teacher and feminist theoretician who consults with people suffering life-threatening diseases and spiritual, creative and emotional crises. Her book, Writing for Your Life: A Guide and Companion to the Inner Worlds, *is a bestseller. She lives in Topanga, Calif.*

Another Woman's Commandment

Thou shalt bring forth the feminine in the world in all that you do. When you are talking to your children, sitting in a board meeting, or lying beside your lover, you will act with *rahamim* (usually translated as "mercy"; the root word comes from "womb"). You will remember that *Shaddai*, God's name, also means breast and shield, and you will fight for lovingkindess in every relationship and in every encounter, never forgetting the transformative power of cooperation and compassion.

—Malka Drucker

Malka Drucker is the author of more than 15 books for children. She has also written, with photographer Gay Block, Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust *(Holmes & Meier).*

Full Voice: The body and self-esteem, an insert with attitude from The Body Sho
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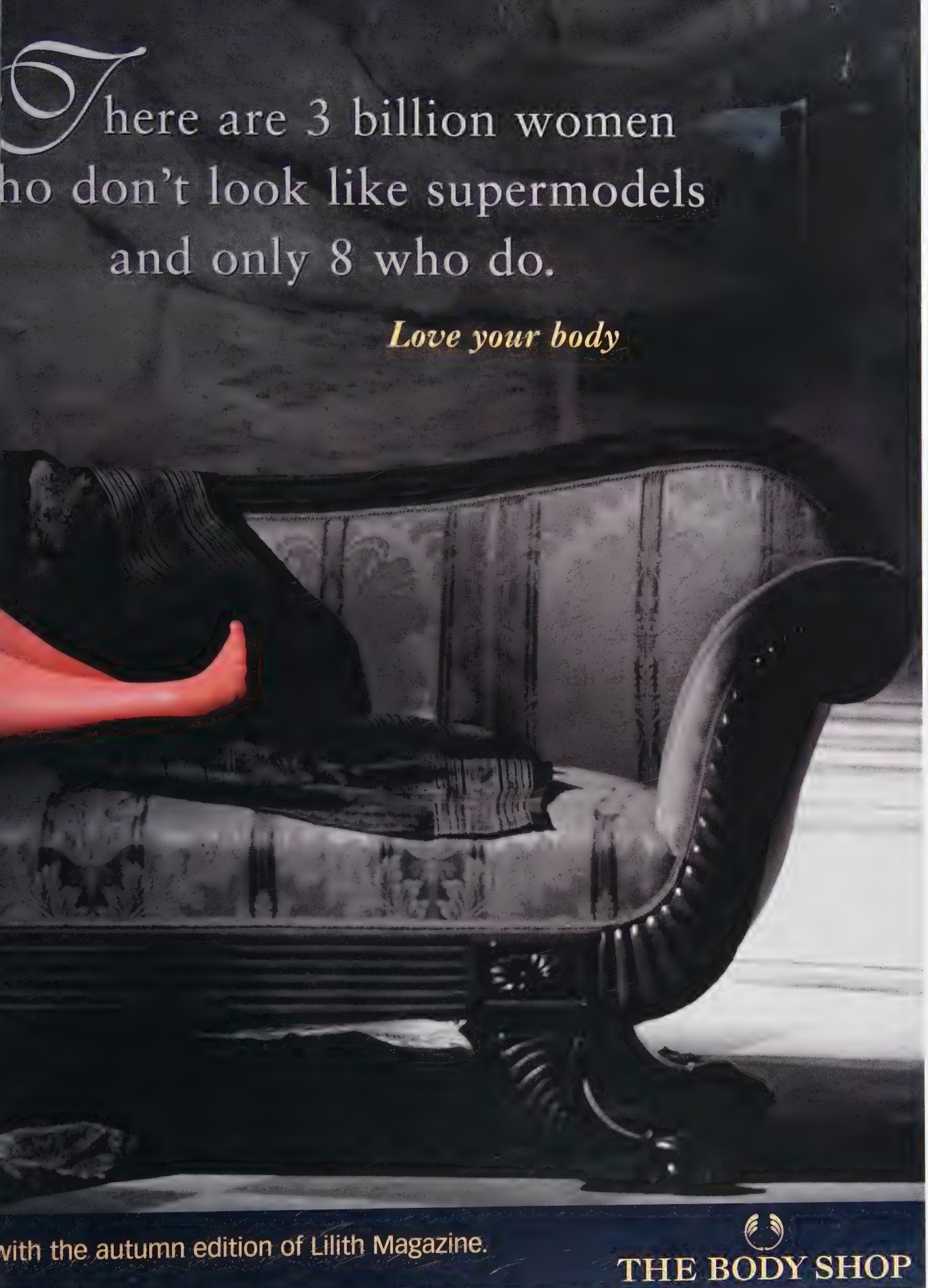
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who don't look like supermodels
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Love your body
with the autumn edition of Lilith Magazine.
THE BODY SHOP

Shabbat Without Shopping Carts

Nancy Maxwell Reinvents the Rules

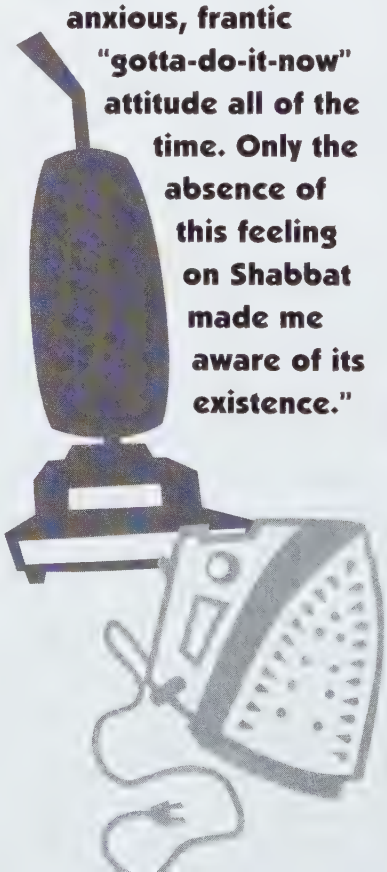
by Nancy Kalikow Maxwell

When I burst into tears over the laundry basket, I knew something would have to change. As I sat there convulsively sobbing, my tears inundating the still-warm lemon-scented sheets, I had to admit that things just could not continue.

It was easy to diagnose the cause of my emotional outburst. I, like an entire generation of fellow working moms, was exhausted. With a husband, daughter, job, graduate school class and house all demanding my time and energy, my tears betrayed the fact that, no matter how hard I tried, I could not "do it all." Though I had always prided myself on maintaining an organized, though hectic, schedule of household duties and errands, my tears revealed that even with all of my lists, systems and constant motion, I still could not manage to get everything done.

I also knew that the two most common women's magazine solutions offered to overworked, overwhelmed working women like me were useless. I could not enlist my husband to do more, nor could I give up something. My husband is already as stressed and exhausted as I am. He works longer and harder at his job than I do. Though he has offered to take on more chores, I failed to see how having *him* crying over the laundry basket, instead of me, would help matters.

"I hadn't realized, until I implemented my Shabbat, how chronically I suffered from an anxious, frantic "gotta-do-it-now" attitude all of the time. Only the absence of this feeling on Shabbat made me aware of its existence."



Nor could I find any activities I was willing to eliminate. I love my full-time job at the library and would not quit, even if I could. Likewise, I refuse to give up the intellectually challenging graduate theology class I take each semester. I have already lowered my housework standards, paid for what few services we can afford, and stopped doing lots of little things. For example, our clothes go from laundry basket to body without even coming close to a dresser drawer; I serve hotdogs or sandwiches for dinner without giving a passing thought to a green vegetable; and, despite the guilt I still feel when I see it, I let fine layers of dust reside upon our dark wood furniture. Still, as my weeping laundry session revealed, even these changes were not enough. I needed to try something radically different.

I found my "radical solution" in an unlikely source, at least it was an unlikely place for a non-observant, non-Orthodox Jew like me. My solution was to resurrect the ancient biblical observance of Shabbat. In his seminal work on Sabbath observance, Abraham Heschel refers to Shabbat as "God's gift of time." I realized that "time" was exactly what I needed.

But, as a liberal, modern, Reconstructionist Jew, I could not and would not

observe a traditional Orthodox Shabbat, with all of the prohibitions against driving, turning on lights, answering the phone, et cetera. Reconstructionist Judaism encourages you to maintain, but alter if necessary, those Jewish practices that can still provide meaning and value in your life. Using that as a guide, I decided I would "reconstruct" Shabbat in a way that would let me observe a traditional day of peace and rest, but in a way that made sense for a contemporary Jewish career woman.

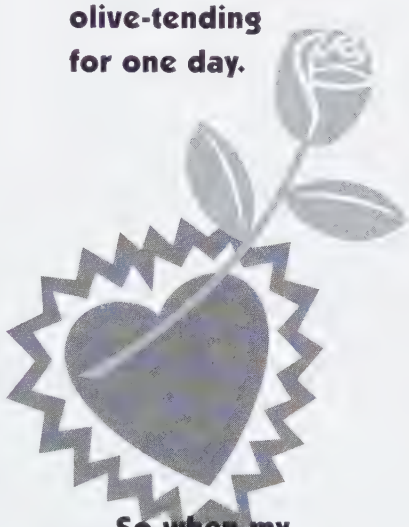
I was still sittting on the floor amidst my tear-dampened bedsheets when I began to construct *"Nancy Maxwell's Save-Your-Own-Life Shabbat Rules"* [see sidebar]. If my ancestors could cease their brick-making and olive-tending for one day, surely I and my family could manage if no laundry or housework was done one day a week! But, unlike my ancestors, I would be the one to decide what was and was not forbidden on Shabbat.

My basic criterion, I decided, would be that, within reason, on Shabbat I would do only things I enjoyed and would avoid anything I found unpleasant. On my Shabbat I would prohibit household chores, errands and guilt-induced obligations. For 24 hours, no birthday, baby, bar/bar mitzvah, or wedding gifts would be purchased. On this one day I would not dash into any dry cleaners, bank or drug store, nor would I call irritating-but-I-know-she-means-well Aunt Sophie.

Along with instituting these Shabbat prohibitions, I also decided that I would reserve pleasant, enjoyable tasks to savor during this special 24-hour slot. Everything from inviting friends over to reading a special magazine would be reserved for this day. Lazy outings I enjoyed would be included too, like browsing at the public library or swimming at the Y.

I implemented my new Shabbat rules the very next Saturday and was amazed at the immediate positive, energizing, regenerative results. The first tangible benefit was witnessed that first Shabbat morning at 8:30 a.m. After breakfast my seven-year-old daughter asked if I could play with her. "Yes," I said. "You can?" she replied incredulously. She did not realize that, thanks to my new Shabbat resolve, I now had time for *her* rather than housework.

WORKING MOMS AND DADS: Your ancestors could cease their brick-making and olive-tending for one day.



So when my then-seven-year-old daughter asked if I could play with her, I said, "Yes." "You can?" she replied incredulously.

Along with time, my new Shabbat rules also gave me a sense of peace and calm beyond anything I ever expected. Now, when I wake up on Saturday mornings, I experience an almost physical sense of *relief* upon realizing that I do not need to *do* anything that day. Most exhilarating is the feeling of being freed from guilt—for an entire day—over not getting things done. I hadn't realized, until I implemented my Shabbat, how chronically I suffered from an anxious, frantic "gotta-do-it-now" attitude all of the time. Only the absence of this feeling on Shabbat made me aware of its existence.

Amazingly, I did not experience any extra burden on the other six days of the week because of my non-work day. Somehow, the K-mart trips, obligatory phone calls and laundry got squeezed in during the week. By adding a few more errands to my other day off or to my lunch hour or my commute, I managed to redesign my days to enable me to enjoy one special day of God's gift of time.

Though I would love for my husband and daughter to join me in this gift of time, their schedules and personal inclinations do not allow this. For now I enjoy my new pleasures of Shabbat alone, but I know my family is benefiting indirectly from my observance. Since I began this reconstituted Shabbat observance eight months ago, I am more relaxed and peaceful every day, not just on Shabbat. And, thanks to my reconstructed Shabbat, I have not once felt like crying over the laundry.

Nancy Kalikow Maxwell is a full-time reference librarian at Barry University, in Miami Shores, Fl., where she is also pursuing a Master's degree in theology. Active in her Reconstructionist synagogue, she is a wife and mother whose "spare time" includes writing a book about her intermarriage.

For the rest of Nancy Maxwell's commandments, turn the page ☛

Nancy Maxwell's Own Commandments

NO shopping

NO housework

NO grocery stores

NO laundry

NO bill paying
(nor even thinking about money)

NO stops at the A.T.M., gas station, or any other errands

NO major cooking or baking

NO obligatory or guilt-induced phone calls

NO doing anything else that I find unpleasant (provided it can be put off for a day without inconveniencing other members of the family—after all, I am still the Mom.)

YES to reading, studying, writing

YES to making love (a double-*mitzvah* according to traditional Judaism)

YES to just being with my husband

YES to playing with and reading to my daughter

YES to having friends and family over for dinner

YES to any outing I find pleasant

YES to physical exercise that I enjoy

YES to anything else that gives me peace and joy.

Too busy to read this article? Save it for Shabbat.

by Susan Schnur

Many of us complain about being harried and exhausted but is the truth really that we are terrified of "stopping the world and getting off"? Are we *afraid* of Shabbat? Are we afraid of discovering, in cessation, that we're depressed? Does our sense of purpose come solely from our accomplishments?

The theologian Abraham Heschel, of course, understood all this. That six days a week of "doing" needed to be counterweighted by one day a week of "being." Otherwise we lose contact with the bigger relationships in life: our relationship with our own inner world, with each other, with our bodies, with mythos (the rhythm of life) instead of just with chronos (clock time).

As women, we are particularly socialized to "read" other people's feelings impeccably, but we are much worse at reading our own deepest feelings and needs. One big reason for this is that it takes a certain amount of solitude and slowing down to even *know* what we feel. Time passing lazily allows for a kind of emotional thinking that psychologists call "sorting"—the slow processes that are necessary and cannot be hurried during which we let our thoughts and feelings sift and regroup. This "sorting"

eventuates in sliding ourselves into sync with our feelings, and of ultimately experiencing a deeply anchored sense of "at homeness" and of "spiritual renewal."

Prayer can work like this, removing us from the hurly-burly and letting us just watch to see what might emerge. A walk by a stream, a lazy morning in bed, a whole day reading the newspaper on an old dirty couch (without worrying about getting it reupholstered), a long ride alone in the car, a traditional *shabbos*—we need these long stretches of time to even begin to get back in touch with our own inner world. Slowing down and solitude—"being" rather than "doing"—can have a permanent effect upon our perception of ourselves and of the world.

Admiral Byrd may seem an odd role model perhaps, but in 1934 he chose to spend a whole winter all by himself in the Antarctic. He could easily have taken other people with him on this expedition, but Byrd, a man of exceptional accomplishments and activity, wrote that he needed to engage in a different kind of daring exploration—that of exploring, in solitude, "the idea of having no important purposes." He had, he wrote, only "one man's desire to know that kind of experience to the full, to be by myself for a while and to taste peace and quiet and solitude long enough to find out how good they really are."

By the end of that winter, in April, Byrd told his diary:

Took my daily walk at 4 p.m. today in 89 degrees of frost. I paused to listen to the silence. The day was dying, the night being born—but with great peace. Here were imponderable processes and forces of the cosmos, harmonious and soundless. Harmony, that was it! That was what came out of the silence—a gentle rhythm, the strain of a perfect chord, the music of the spheres, perhaps.

It was enough to catch that rhythm, momentarily to be myself a part of it. In that instant I could feel no doubt of man's oneness with the universe. The conviction came that that rhythm was too orderly, too harmonious, too perfect to be a product of blind chance—that, therefore, there must be purpose in the whole and that man was part of that whole and not an accidental offshoot. It was a feeling that transcended reason; that went to the heart of man's despair and found it groundless. The universe was a cosmos, not a chaos; man [woman too, we hasten to add] *was as rightfully a part of that cosmos as were the day and night.*

The Jewish invention which involves having a dialogue with existence is called, of course, Shabbat. And so the Ten Commandments [Exodus 20:8-11] tell us: "Six days you should labor and do all your work. . . . For in six days God made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them." And we think we're busy???

Be like God, the Exodus passage advises us: "Rest on the seventh day." Like Byrd, explore the idea of having "no important purposes at all." Have the courage to get back in touch with the belief that there might actually be a point to it all—that we humans might be "as rightfully a part of the cosmos as is the day and night."

If we put our female "lifestyle traps" on hold for a moment and slow down, might we be able to bring our purposelessness up to speed with the rest of our lives?

And, do we dare to find out to what effect? ■

Time Out

Five ways to apply the brakes

• Drive 10 mph slower.
Many of us drive fast, even when we're not in a rush. Try a new route or simply notice the old one more.

• Take a moment before eating.
Saying *hamotzi* or just sitting quietly reminds us to notice our meal instead of just wolfing it down.

• Shower after work.
Just for a minute or two, to "wash away" the day's work and allow you to leave it behind for the evening.

• Wait a few rings before answering the phone.
We often rush to pick it up immediately, prolonging our hectic mood.

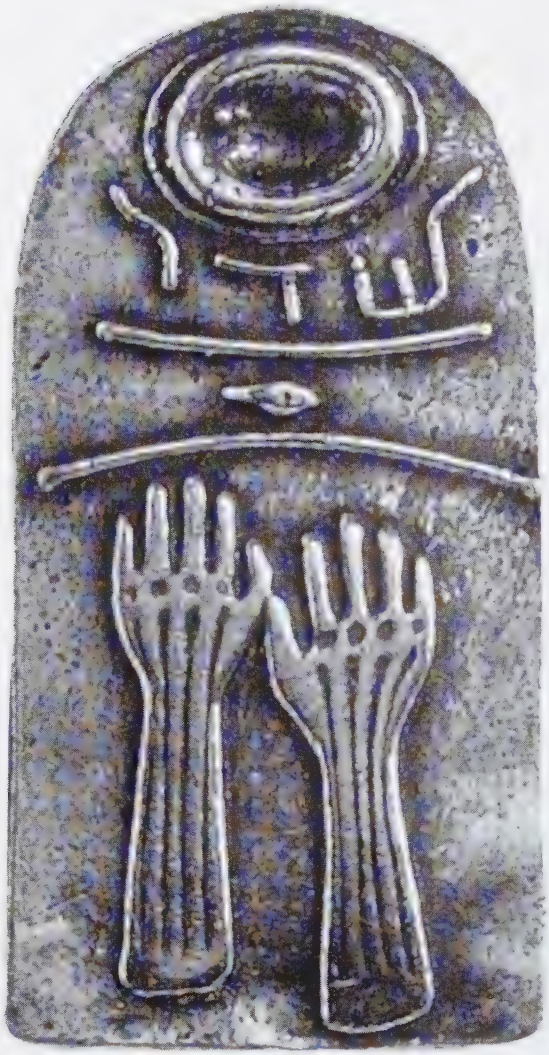
• Honor the process itself.
Whatever the task or activity, slow down, do just one thing, do it well, and allow yourself the sense of accomplishment without feeling the need to get it done and move on.

adapted from
Psychology Today

HEALTH & HEALING

A PACKET OF REPRINTS FROM LILITH

the independent Jewish women's magazine



Blessing Hands Mezuzah, by Katya

This special packet features articles on AIDS and cancer, new rituals for childbirth and circumcision, a look at 12-step programs and Jewish psychotherapists, and new approaches to helping healing by Rachel Cowan, Harriet Goldhor Lerner, Susan Schnur, Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz and others. Here are the experiences of women as they try to heal from breast cancer, mental illness and child sexual abuse, and as they learn to live with hysterectomies and chronic illness. Here are some samples of how ritual, community and knowledge can heal us:

- How to Cheer the Sick
- After Miscarriage: A Midwife's Kaddish
- Breast Cancer—Is it Really Risky to Be Jewish?
- Ministering to the Old
- 12 STEPS, 12 VIEWS
- Are You a Therapist with a Jewish Client? Read on...
- "What God Takes": Bris and Mastectomy
- Helping a Friend Through Breast Cancer
- Child Sexual Abuse in a Holocaust Family
- After Incest
- Memoir of an AIDS Volunteer
- Instructions for the Birthing Team
- The Magical Properties of Worrying
- "Is Suffering Transformative?"

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MADE POSSIBLE IN PART WITH THE GENEROUS ASSISTANCE OF THE ALBERT NORDHEIMER TRUST FUND AND FRANCES AND HUBERT J. BRANDT

Shicker

my friend said, grinning, embarrassed,
bringing the word up from childhood,
when I said, "No one at our meetings is Jewish."
Shicker: a drunk, *the* drunk, is a good translation,
but the *sh* of shame and shush,
the parody of a drunk's slurred speech
makes shicker meaner. And the *ker* is like growling.
And then my husband remembered Uncle Willie
who died of cirrhosis,
that when anyone in the family mentioned Willie,
they whispered, shicker.

Besides, Jews don't drink.
Besides, my son's never drunk in *that* way.
If it weren't for the stink of gin on his pores in the morning,
if his eyes weren't veined with scarlet for no reason,
I wouldn't have a clue he was "using."

Shicker.

I'm rubbing my nose in it, saying it,
putting it into my poems
when what I want to do
is wrap a towel around his nakedness,
stand in front of him, shield him.
Shicker.

The word explodes like spit,
unredeemable, outside the circle,
someone not to invest a penny of your time in.
I want to hide my son in the tucks of my heart,
take him food there secretly,
plant kisses on his cheek. Shicker.
Is there no mercy in the truth?

—Sondra Zeidenstein

ILLUSTRATION BY TIM PURUS

Sondra Zeidenstein is a poet, editor and publisher of Chicory Blue Press, a small literary press focusing on writing by women past 60. The latest title of the press is The Crimson Edge: Older Women Writing, *an anthology of writing by seven women whose average age is 73. A selection of her recent poems is included in* Passionate Lives, *edited by Elizabeth Claman, (Queen of Swords Press, 1997).*

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Under the Spell of Silken Tofu

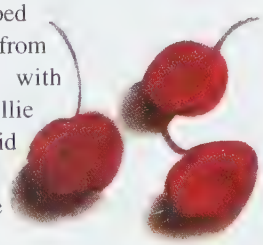
How Mollie Katzen's Cooking Enchanted a Whole Generation

by Emily Bazelon

The back cover of my copy of the Moosewood Cookbook came off the other day. The masking tape I used to patch it is in keeping with the rest of the book, which is dog-eared and food-speckled. There's a small piece of onion stuck to page 13, next to a recipe for curried squash and mushroom soup, and what could be a footprint atop the instructions for Mexican corn and chili bread. The book belongs to my husband, so I can't trace the history of every grease stain and tomato sauce dribble. But their origins are familiar.

Paul and I lived on this same sycamore-lined block during college, part of an off-campus neighborhood of backpackers and recyclers. Six or seven groups of students moved into houses along the street, ready to turn down the heat, dig compost piles, and quit eating meat. I shared a sprawling five-bedroom house with four other women. We had big plans to live and eat cheaply, healthily, and well. The only problem was that we'd grown up on dinners of hamburgers and broiled chicken, and while they had no place on the picnic table that graced our dining room, we weren't sure how to make whatever would take their place.

The *Moosewood Cookbook*—a new sequel is due out this fall—took over where our know-how left off. We relied on the recipes' earnest, step-by-step instructions (they never assume that you know to soak beans before cooking them) and enjoyed the accompanying whimsical illustrations. When a bunch of neighbors got together to place an order with a local food co-op, my house bought a 15-pound bucket of tahini and burlap bags filled with lentils and chickpeas. With the *Moosewood* as our guide we turned the tahini and chickpeas into quarts of hummus and the lentils into steaming pots of soup. And once I gained the skill to elaborate a little, playing with the recipes—"Oh, I think I'll just throw in some kale"—made me feel like I actually knew what I was doing.



The *Moosewood* helped save me and my friends from starvation. But, along with cookbook writer Mollie Katzen's later books, it did more than that. The recipes helped us locate

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ourselves in the world. They are cultural touchstones for a loose network of crunchy-granola 20- and 30-somethings. They followed me to my first holiday meal in Jerusalem (orange, cashew, and sweet potato pie in a spinach crust) and continue to guide me through the paradise of fruit-and-vegetable-rich California cooking. When I see one of the books on a friend's kitchen shelf, I feel like I'm at home.

The haphazard nature of her own cooking led Katzen to the innovation that's at the center of her new cookbook. *Mollie Katzen's Vegetable Heaven*, due out in October with a companion public-television show, does not have a chapter for entrees and another for side dishes. Instead, Katzen decided to scuttle the hunk-of-something-in-the-center-of-the-plate tradition in favor of "side-by-side dishes" that readers can mix and match. "I'd come up with a good broccoli stir-fry and a lentil puree and then get worried about what the main dish was," she says. "But then I realized 'Hey, that's what I like to eat for dinner,'" she says.

The *Moosewood* turns 20 this year. When it came out, Katzen was the same age I am now. Still, she's surprised by the book's generation-spanning appeal since she wrote it primarily for her friends' moms. "At the time a lot of mothers were suspicious about vegetarian food, because they thought it lacked protein and also richness," said Katzen, 46, as she sipped a fruit juice outside the Berkeley Bakery Cafe. "I wanted to calm them down by proving that vegetarian cooking could be opulent and rich and very, very good."

Katzen's own mother kept a basically kosher home in Rochester, N.Y. "Meat and milk were separate, and we never ate pork or shellfish, though my mother didn't buy kosher meat. She'd throw something over the steaks to cover them when she ran into the *rebbetzin* at the market," Katzen remembers.

The family ate dinners of flank steaks, Minute Rice, and the occasional frozen vegetable. When she was 12, Katzen encountered fresh green beans at a friend's country home. "I was absolutely transfixed," she says, her smile widening. "I developed a very serious interest in vegetables during middle school."

Katzen says she began jotting down some of the recipes in the *Moosewood* while learning to cook at a now-defunct San Francisco restaurant called Shandygaff. It was 1970, and aside from die-hard macrobiotics, not many people knew how to cook vegetarian. Katzen was getting a degree in painting at the San Francisco Art Institute, and when she heard a Shandygaff radio ad trumpeting cutting-edge California cuisine, she took a bus straight from the studio and asked them to hire her.

From Shandygaff, Katzen went to the Moosewood Restaurant in Ithaca, N.Y. Several chefs had taken over part of a former elementary school, founded a restaurant collective, and cooked free-form without a set menu. Katzen helped

chronicle the recipes in the journals she'd brought from San Francisco. Still interested in a career in painting, she often added drawings to explain an instruction or evoke a favorite vegetable. Hand-lettered and illustrated, the original compilation passed quickly among customers' kitchens.

The *Moosewood* wasn't the first major meatless cookbook, but it didn't preach—the word vegetarian doesn't even appear in the first edition—and read like what it was: a low-key guide for a bunch of friends. "That's why the book is so informal," Katzen says. "If I'd known other people were going to use it, I probably would have been a lot more self-conscious." In 1977, a small Berkeley press quietly published it.

It's the perfect story for the making of a homey classic, and the *Moosewood*, together with Katzen's three other books, has sold three and a half million copies. But the story also has a controversial wrinkle: other cooks at the Ithaca restaurant said that Katzen had taken credit for a collaborative project. The fight led to litigation, which was settled out of court.

Katzen left the restaurant, which was later sold, and came back to the Bay Area in the early 1980s. She hasn't cooked professionally since, though she says that preparing food for others doesn't make her nervous. "Naahh," she says "I enjoy it." But she's not a big entertainer. "What happens a lot is that I'll be testing a new recipe—like recently I was working on a grapefruit curd tart, which is really hard to get right because the grapefruit tend to get weepy and then the crust goes soft—and I'll have six of that and nothing else in the kitchen for dinner."

Katzen's "course-less" approach in the new book follows naturally from her earlier effort to lighten up the dairy-heavy original *Moosewood* recipes. Katzen revised the book five years ago to satisfy the fat- and oil-conscious (though many of us had already figured out that six servings of Swiss cheese and onion soup don't really require five tablespoons of butter). In the new book, cutting time, as well as fat, is of the essence.

"In the 1970s no one cared about fat or fiber content, or about the time it took to cook some of these things," Katzen says. "The first *Moosewood* even has a recipe for homemade egg rolls." Now the challenge is to keep the ingredient list simple and preparation time under half an hour. "It's easy to come up with a fantastic recipe based on rosemary-infused olive oil and the perfect tomato," Katzen says, giving me hunger pangs. "But that's not the point, because my readers often can't shop in the fancy stores they might like to, and the bottom line is that they need dinner!"

Katzen's own family keeps her experimenting. I gushed when I discovered her son Sam among my bar-mitzvah students, but this mature Berkeley 12-year-old shrugged me off like a natural. "Yeah, people are always saying how my mom is this great vegetarian chef," he said. "It's kind of funny since all I like to eat is hamburgers and hotdogs."

Along with Sam-the-hamburger-lover ("Actually, he does like tofu with peanut sauce," his mother insists), five-and-a-half-year-old Eve has a taste for sugar, not vegetables. "Good food just doesn't hold her attention, doesn't call her name," Katzen says of her daughter. She shakes her head and pauses between words to emphasize the unthinkable. "She skips meals." Other frustrated moms may relish knowing that Chinese food is the only dinner Katzen, her husband Carl, Sam, and Eve all like to share.

Katzen herself isn't a strict vegetarian, though she sticks to fish and free-range chicken. While her recipes include a wide range of ethnic influences, she credits her mother's Jewish cooking as a kind of indirect inspiration. One of her books, *Still Life with Menu*, offers up a vegetarian seder. When I mention a mushroom casserole that's a particular favorite, Katzen says the dish she grew up eating was made from Campbell's cream of mushroom soup and cornstarch. "I use my mother's cooking," Katzen says. "I just try to figure out how to make it taste good with my kind of ingredients."

At 12, Katzen discovered fresh green beans at a friend's home. "I was transfixed."

The night before I talked to Katzen, I went out for Ethiopian food with two of my college housemates and asked them about learning to cook. "Page 91!" Mandy said right away. "That's my page in the Moosewood. It's the recipe for hummus." Chani claimed page five, a sweet-potato and chick-pea-based brew called Gypsy Soup. I couldn't pin myself down to one recipe, though in college I think I mostly stuck to lentils. We agreed that we still turn to the *Moosewood* when we want a kugel to bring to a potluck, or a pot of soup simmering on the stove on a cold day.

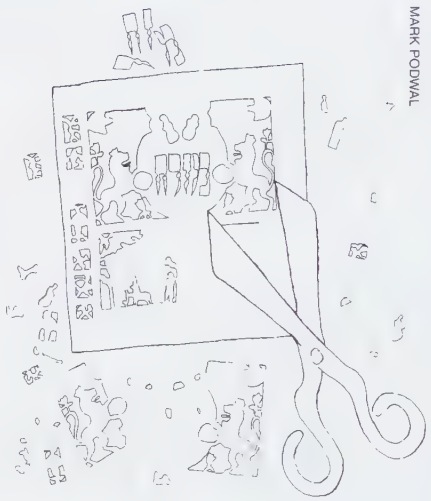
This is true even though the food isn't what our mothers cooked us—I don't remember mine ever serving beans for dinner. In fact, my mom once fit well into the original audience of suspicious elders that Katzen hoped to woo. I've since given her one of Katzen's books, and she's become a fan (though she sometimes has to add meat to the recipes for my dad).

As for my own generation, my friends and I are no longer strict vegetarians, but we're still trying to eat cheaply and healthily and well. Katzen's glad to help us through her books. "I care very much about trying to influence people, especially young women, to have a constructive, powerful, self-nurturing, sensual relationship with food," she says as she drains the last of her fruit juice. "My books try to convey that cooking good food can be a source of incredible stability. That's not a trivial thing to me at all."

Emily Bazelon is a freelance writer in Berkeley, Calif. Her favorite Moosewood recipe is Cascadilla Soup.

The Klagsbrun Calendar

Francine Klagsbrun's latest work, Jewish Days: A Book of Jewish Life and Culture Around the Year *(illustrated by Mark Podwal; Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1996) inserts into the rhythm of the Jewish months explanations of Rosh Hodesh (the celebration of the New Moon, traditionally a women's holiday), historical events often omitted from the Jewish calendars hanging on most refrigerators, and interpretive nuggets to enjoy the year 'round. Tammuz, the mid-summer month, marks several catastrophes, including the burning of the Talmud in Paris (1242) and the death (in 1105) of the brilliant Torah commentator Rashi. Here's how Klagsbrun enriches our understanding of the conflation of myth and history in the Jewish past, as she explicates the name this month bears:*

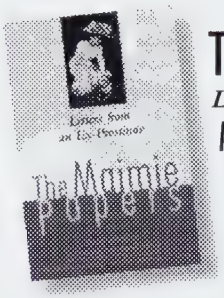


MARK PODWAL

When the prophet Ezekiel recounted the abominations he had witnessed in a vision of the Temple courtyard, he included the women who sat together near its north gate bewailing Tammuz (8:14). The reference is to a goddess-worshipping cult that survived in First Temple times in spite of the prophets' many exhortations against paganism. The cult's source was Babylonian mythology, itself rooted in earlier Sumerian beliefs.

It was a folk cult, particularly popular among women, who may have been more enticed by it than men because they were excluded from Temple ritual. It was built around the goddess Ishtar, lover of the beautiful fertility god Tammuz. Every year in the month of *Tammuz*, which bore the god's name, he descended into the netherworld, and all vegetation withered and died (as it does during this hot summer month in the Near East). But Ishtar would go after him and despite many difficulties manage to resurrect him so that by the following spring the earth would blossom again. The women, and some men, bewailed the gods' disappearance with formal dirges and mournful poems. When Ishtar returned and Tammuz after her, they paid tribute to her with incense and libations.

In Greek mythology the story of Venus and Adonis, who also dies but from whose blood the anemone flower grows, is related to that of Ishtar and Tammuz, Some scholars say that the fast of the seventeenth of Tammuz on the Jewish calendar [when the Romans breached the walls of Jerusalem] carries traces of the old mourning period for the god Tammuz. If so, these traces, like fragments of ancient myths in other aspects of the calendar, are buried beneath layers of historical meaning.



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Di Froyen/Women and Yiddish: Tribute to the Past, Directions for the Future

National Council of Jewish Women New York Section. Jewish Women's Resource Center, 1997. 9 East 69th Street, New York, NY 10021-4988. Tel. (212)535-5900. $15 plus $3 for shipping and handling within the US, $5 elsewhere.

This collection of new studies on women and Yiddish originated from a highly successful 1995 Di Froyen: Women and Yiddish conference. Spanning a wide variety of topics, the contributors reinforce the idea that women had a formative impact on Yiddish culture.

In her keynote address, author and self-described "secular Jewish activist" Irena Klepfisz uses the biography of Jewish Labor Bundist Anna Heller Rosenthal to discuss the connection between Yiddish and feminism. Klepfisz emphasizes how one of the goals of the conference could have come directly from the socialist Yiddish manifesto, *"ale tsuzamen in gerangl,"* "all together in the struggle."

Papers on "Women and Traditional Yiddishkayt" range from a discussion of female role models in the *Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln* to an anthropological analysis of a Chasidic women's performance of a Yiddish musical. Chava Weissler of Lehigh University is represented by an essay on women as religious subjects in *tkhines,* part of her ongoing research on these Yiddish women's prayers. A section on "Women and Yiddish Literature: Some Historical Perspectives" has essays by Naomi Seidman on the sexual politics of the Hebrew-Yiddish "Language War," a historical overview of women as readers of sacred and secular Yiddish literature, and an examination of the portrayal of women in the writings

of the classical Yiddish writers Mendele Mokher Sforim, Y.L. Peretz, and Sholem Aleichem. Kathryn Hellerstein, Goldie Morgentaler and Judith Friedlander examine various feminist concerns with translating to and from Yiddish. Morgentaler's article about her translation into Yiddish of the French Canadian play *Les Belles Soeurs* is especially interesting. Other papers dealt with "Lebensveg," or women's ways, focusing on women in Yiddish political circles, educational issues and cultural representations and productions of women. One essay about a recently published Yiddish macrobiotic and mostly vegan cookbook written by a Chasidic mother of 12, reveals how modernity has insinuated itself into Yiddish-based Chasidic life. Essays on women's literature, women and the Yiddish theater, and "Feminism, Yiddishkayt, and Jewish Identity" round out the academic portion of the collection.

Aside from the scholarly essays, also included are transcripts of workshops on various topics, ranging from "Identity Politics and the Role of Lesbians in the Renewal of Secular Yiddish Culture" to how one woman functions in her trilingual household. Her children speak Yiddish, in addition to English and the Tamil of their South Asian father (who also speaks fluent Yiddish!). An appendix with bibliographies of primary and secondary Yiddish sources, textbooks, and Yiddish resources and institutions completes the collection. "Di Froyen" is a must for anyone interested in the most current research on Eastern European Jewish women's literary, cultural, religious and political history. —*Susan Sapiro*

Vital reading for anyone concerned with contemporary women's reimagining of the sacred."
—Cross Currents

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Conference Proceedings

די פֿרויען

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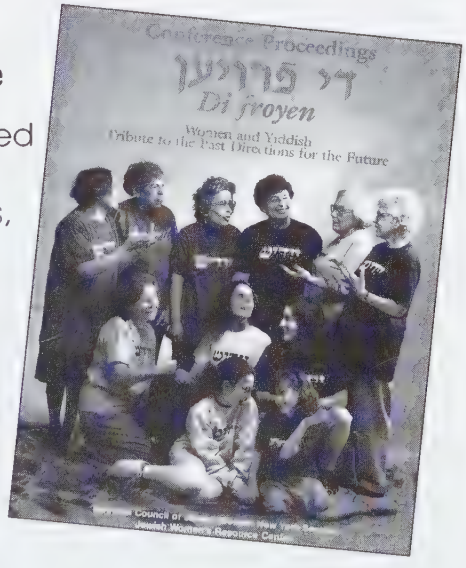

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Books Received: A Selection

Each season LILITH reviewers decide which books of interest to Jewish women we want to highlight. Here, a listing of some of the noteworthy books on our shelf. An appearance here does not preclude a review in a forthcoming issue of LILITH; we just want to let our readers know about these books in a timely fashion.

Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today by Margot Adler (Penguin, 1997, $16.95). Reissued in paperback.

Heretic's Heart: A Journey through Spirit and Revolution by Margot Adler (Beacon Press, 1997, $24.00). A memoir of the Sixties.

Kibbutz Buchenwald: Survivors and Pioneers by Judith Tydor Baumel (Rutgers University Press, 1997).

Five Hundred Great Books by Women: A Reader's Guide by Erica Bauermeister, Jesse Larsen, & Holly Smith (Penguin Books, 1994, $12.95).

A Tradition That Has No Name: Nurturing the Development of People, Families, and Communities by Mary Field Belensky, Lynne A. Bond, & Jacqueline S. Weinstock (BasicBooks, 1997, $28.00). How women empower themselves.

The Fun Palace by Agnes Bernelle (Lilliput Press, 1996, $21.00). An autobiography of an Irish Jewish actress.

The Genius of the Jewish Joke by Arthur Asa Berger (Jason Aronson, Inc, 1997).

Making a Scene: The Contemporary Drama of Jewish American Women by Sarah Blacher Cohen (Syracuse University Press, 1997). A collection of seven plays by Wendy Wasserstein, Barbara Lebow and others.

Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man by Daniel Boyarin (University of California, 1997, $18.95).

Memories of a Berlin Childhood by Marianne Buchwalter (Premiere Editions, 1995, $17.95).

Live Sex Acts: Women Performing Erotic Labor by Wendy Chapkis (Rutledge, 1997). A socio-political look at the feminist debate that surrounds prostitution: are these women as subjugated and silent as we have been led to believe?

The Crucified Jew: Twenty Years of Christian Anti-Semitism by Dan Cohn-Sherbok (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992).

Life and Death: Unapologetic Writings on the Continuing War Against Women by Andrea Dworkin (The Free Press, 1997, $23.00).

Beyond the Pale by Elana Dykewomon (Press Gang Publishers, 1997, $19.95). A fictional account of Russian Jewish lesbians who immigrate to North America at the turn of the century.

Minding the Temple of the Soul: Balancing Body, Mind, and Spirit through Traditional Jewish Prayer, Movement, and Meditation by Tamar Frankiel & Judy Greenfield (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1997, $15.95).

The Road to Auschwitz: Fragments of a Life by Hedi Fried (Bison Books, 1990, $10.00).

Isha Bor (Womanswell) by Zvia Ben-Yoseph Ginor (Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1996). A book of Hebrew poetry.

The Best Little Girl Says Goodbye: A Therapist Grieves by Blanche Rosen Goodwin (Rutledge Books, 1997, $15.95).

Pathways: Jews Who Return by Richard H. Greenberg (Jason Aronson, inc., 1997). A collection of first person accounts of *baalei teshuvah*.

Children in the Holocaust and World War II: Their Secret Diaries by Laurel Holliday (Washington Square Press, 1995, $12.00).

Voicing the Void: Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction by Sara R. Horowitz (State University of New York Press, 1997).

Ground Rules: What I Learned My Daughter's Fifteenth Year by Sherril Jaffe (Kodansha International, 1997, $20.00)

Aspiring Women: A History of the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women by Jenna Weisman Joselit (Jewish Foundation for Education of Women, 1996).

The Escape Artist by Judith Katz (Firebrand Books, 1997, $12.95). A novel about Jewish lesbians in Buenos Aires.

Mothers: Twenty Stories of Contemporary Motherhood edited by Katrina Kenison and Kathleen Hirsch (North Point Press, 1996, $13.00).

Echoes from the Holocaust: A Memoir by Mira Rycze Kimmelman (University of Tennessee Press, 1997).

The Harlot by the Side of the Road: Forbidden Tales of the Bible by Jonathan Kirsch (Ballatine Books, 1997, $27.00).

A Treasury of American Jewish Folklore by Steve Koppman & Lion Koppman (Jason Aronson, Inc., 1996).

Why History Matters: Life and Thought by Gerda Lerner (Oxford University Press, 1997, $30.00).

[Conversations With] Dvora: An Experimental Biography of the First Modern Hebrew Woman Writer by Amia Lieblich (University of California Press, 1997, $16.95).

Practical Parenting: A Jewish Perspective by Gail Josephson Lipsitz (Ktav Publishing, 1997, $17.95).

Notes from an Incomplete Revolution: Real Life Since Feminism by Meredith Maran (Bantam Books, 1997, $22.95).

Doors to Madame Marie by Odette Meyers (University of Washington Press, 1997, $22.95). A memoir of a Jewish girl's coming of age in Nazi-occupied France.

An Intricate Weave: Women Write About Girls and Adulthood edited by Marlene Miller (Iris Editions, 1997, $15.95).

Never to be Forgotten: A Young Girl's Holocaust Memoir by Beatrice Muchman (Ktav Publishing, 1997, $23.00).

The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory edited by Linda Nicholson (Routledge, 1997, $22.95).

The Secret Book of Grazia Del Rossi by Jacqueline Park (Simon & Schuster, 1997, $25.00). A novel about an influential Jewish woman during the Italian Rennaissance.

Everyday Acts Against Racism: Raising Children in a Multiracial World edited by Maureen T. Reddy (Seal Press, 1996, $15.95).

Distant Sisters: The Women I Left Behind by Judith Rotem (The Jewish Publication Society, 1997). A look into the lives of ultra-Orthodox women in Israel by a woman who was once one of them.

The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism by Regina M. Schwartz (University of Chicago Press, 1997, $22.95). The author confronts the dark side of the Bible which she feels causes strife and hatred, and offers an alternative reading of the text by focusing on ethics.

Lost Love: The Untold Story of Henrietta Szold by Baila Round Shargel (Jewish Publication Society, 1997).

Women, Jewish Law, and Modernity: New Opportunities in a Post-Feminist Age by Joel B. Wolowelsky (Ktav Publishing, 1997).

The Shame Borne in Silence: Spouse Abuse in the Jewish Community by Abraham J. Twerski, M.D. (Mirkov Publications, 1996, $16.95) ■

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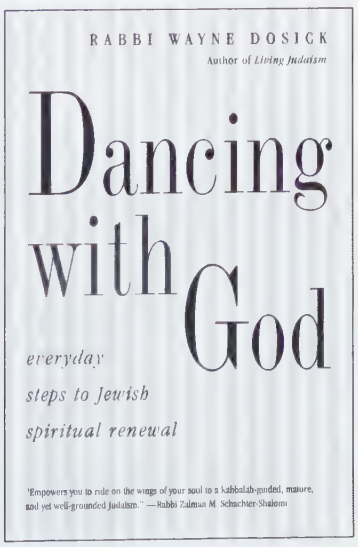
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LILITH SPEAKS

BY ALISON STONE

I have got your letters, husband,
Every one. You say *Come back.*
The garden hums. Lie beneath me
And the sun will turn us both to gold.

You send me blossoms, fruit.
And the threats you do not sign, carved
Into the bark of trees.

I am not afraid.
When your Father's angels tried to drown me,
Mother's liquid arms raised me to air.

But you are dying, Adam,
Twin, my mate. There was no rib.
Our cleaving caused the ache in your side.

Eve is just a woman,
Not the sharp-clawed Goddess
Of your honest dreams.

Here with my sisters I laugh.
Moon-veiled, I dance with panthers,
Share rich caves with bear.
But your absence is a bone in my throat.

You make me owl, demon,
Night mare galloping across your sleep.
You say you are complete
But your homes are cracking as you pray.
Your libraries totter.
My name is the foundation's missing brick.

Before you smother earth with concrete,
Fill the air with smoke,
Before bombs leave a land of ash,
Will you wake up and come
Where love makes all parts one again
And I am always waiting?

Alison Stone's poems have appeared in the Paris Review, Poetry, Ploughshares, and many other journals and anthologies. She is a psychotherapist in private practice in New York City.

(continued from page 8)

I would like to clarify one point with respect to my own experience, however. I would not say that I have "no desire to return to [my] roots on Chicago's South Side" (p.27). My Black roots are an integral part of my self-identification as a person of mixed descent. It would be accurate, though, to say that I have no desire to return to live in the neighborhood on Chicago's South Side in which my roots lie—the result of the unwelcome treatment I received in that neighborhood as I was growing up (see p. 22).

I'm sure I speak for others who were represented in and/or read that article when I express my hope for a time when no one is unwelcome in any place.

Jan Weisman
Seattle, WA

Food from Memory's Kitchen

This year we have been given a gift regarding a new way to commemorate the Shoah. Even as we continue to refine the ways of remembering the deaths of our six million loved ones, so we must turn to new ways of celebrating their lives. With the publication of *In Memory's Kitchen*, (reviewed in Winter 1996) we have been given a treasure handed down from woman to woman, and in the case of this manuscript, from mother to daughter. I would like to imagine that this year, we each take a recipe carefully recalled and recorded by the women in Theresienstadt, and make it, and serve it at our family's meals, or at our synagogue programs. If the women could preserve recipes, tokens of who they were, how they nourished their families, where their sacred space could be found, symbols—no, banners—of defiance and life in the face of hatred and hell, then perhaps this is one of the ways we can move from memories of death to memories of life.

Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin
via e-mail

Each year I hold an "Open Sukkah" reception at home for my congregants and friends. I bake like crazy—it's therapeutic after all those sermons. This year there was a recipe from *In Memory's Kitchen* revised and published in the Chicago Tribune, for a *"gesundheitkuchen"*—a good health cake" presumably brought to women after childbirth. I decide to make it, with real butter, and too many eggs and all. (What would we call "good health" today?) I also baked my mother's family recipe for plum kuchen, which we always have for Rosh Hashanah. And as I baked them, I had the most wonderful feeling that somehow these women who had handed down these recipes were there in the kitchen with me.

Both my mother and my husband's mother lost family members in Theresienstadt. Some of them I know something about, but most not. This book, and its simple defiant statement of hope, really blew me away. It made me realize even more what a labor of love my cooking is—a gift for my family and friends—and that I stand in an honorable tradition of Jewish women who transmitted so much with the food they created. It made me think more about how so many of my peers don't cook anymore—they're too busy or it's not a priority and I understand that, but I know that this is something I love to do. Perhaps it's because I get to see (and eat!) the result of my work immediately, whereas in the rabbinate, I usually have to be content with long-term gratification. Now, each year as I bake plum kuchen in the fall, or make my Pesach nut tortes and matzah balls from recipes from my German foremothers, I feel their spirits in the kitchen with me.

Rabbi Ellen
Weinberg Dreyfus
via e-mail

The Nanny

Contrary to Nora Lee Mandel's statement that Fran Drescher's character is "a shiny . . . clothes-horse hunting rich non-Jewish men" ("Media Watch: What the World Sees in the 'The Nanny,'" Winter 1996), the Nanny has more than once declared her requirement that her future husband be Jewish. ("If he were Jewish, I'd marry him," she said of one appealing prospect.) Even her fantasized wedding to employer Maxwell Sheffield was under a *chuppah*, with a rabbi officiating. Her expressed desire to marry within her faith is a minority view among TV's current Jewish characters.

Judith and Jonathan Pearl
Floral Park, NY

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To Your Health

How common is hereditary breast cancer? Are Ashkenazic women more likely to inherit alterations of the BRCA genes than women of other ethnic groups? Can a woman's genetic information be used by insurance companies or employers to discriminate against her? These are among the questions discussed in "Understanding the Genetics of Breast Cancer for Jewish Women," a pamphlet that summarizes material presented at the landmark spring 1996 conference hosted by the American Jewish Congress and co-sponsored by seven national Jewish women's organizations who are also distributing copies. Obtain a copy for $2 from *Lois Waldman, AJC, 15 E. 84 St., New York, NY 10028.*

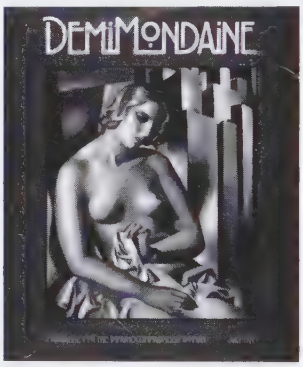
The Israel Association for the Advancement of Women's Health makes the point that improving women's health will improve everyone's health, since women are the majority of healthcare consumers and providers and are the intermediaries between their families and the healthcare system. This public nonprofit organization founded in 1994 aims to improve the health of women in Israel by disseminating information, educating for the prevention of illness and promotion of health, and working in the community with women of various ethnic groups and ages who are at risk. *Amy Avgar, Executive Director, IAAWH, P.O. Box 46155, Jerusalem 91460, Israel, (972-2)7614811; fax (972-2)5611159; e-mail iaahwh@netvision.net.il*

Understanding the Genetics of Breast Cancer for Jewish Women is the subject of a major study directed by Dr. Mary Claire King, the renowned geneticist who helped identify and isolate the breast cancer genes. In conjunction with seven New York-area hospitals, King will study the genetics of breast cancer among Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jewish women, seeking to discover precisely what the risk is for Jewish women with these mutations, and whether and in what way environmental and lifestyle factors modify that risk. Participating women will have the option of receiving genetic counseling and obtaining the results of their genetic test or of remaining anonymous. If you are a Jewish woman with breast cancer diagnosed in 1994 or later and you wish to participate and have not been contacted by one of the cooperating hospitals, call *Judith Hull, (914)395-2239.*

One in Nine: Women for Women with Cancer was established in 1994 in Tel Aviv to unite women in Israel who suffer from breast cancer. The organization provides them with information and support at all stages of the illness through a telephone network, resource library, a booklet of "questions to ask your physician" plus support groups and referrals. *One in Nine: Women for Women with Cancer, 19 Shenkin St., Tel Aviv, Israel 65321; tel/fax (972-3)5255232.*

For an Online Calendar for National Breast Cancer Awareness Month—which is October—send information about your local program or find out about an activity you can participate in. Contact: *Jessica Fiorelli, NABCO, 9 E. 37th St., 10th fl., New York, NY 10016; (800)719-9154; fax (212)689-1213; web site http://www.nabco.org; e-mail NABCOinfo@aol.com*

Demi Mondaine: A Magazine for the Immunocompromised Woman will debut in July and be published beginning in January as an interdisciplinary quarterly focusing on the education and empowerment of women with HIV disease, lupus, organ transplants,



chemotherapy and others. Articles on clinical topics—such as vaginitis, protease inhibitors, and potential risks of AZT therapy on maternal fetal transmission—will be supplemented with conference reports, profiles of women, book reviews, articles on lifestyle issues and political action information. Available free in clinics and at community organizations that care for women or by subscription from *International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care, 225 W. Washington St., #2200, Chicago, IL 60606; fax (312)419-7079; e-mail demi@iapac.org*

Gilda's Club is a nonprofit organization named for the late comedienne Gilda Radner, who died of ovarian cancer in 1988. A supplement to regular medical care, it offers support and networking groups, lectures, workshops, relaxation, stress reduction, pot-luck suppers and social events free of charge to individuals with cancer, their families and friends. The "flagship clubhouse," opened in 1995, includes a training center to replicate the club in other locations. Clubs already exist in Hollywood, FL, Metro Detroit, London, Davenport, IA, Chicago, Seattle, Ashtabula, OH, Nashville, TN, Greater Toronto, South Burlington, VT, Grand Rapids, MI, Utica, NY and Portland ME. *Gilda's Club, 195 W. Houston St., New York, NY 10014; (212)647-9700.*

Menopause Handbook describes the changes that can take place in this normal life transition, and suggests ways of dealing with them in 50 pages of information, support and encouragement. Newly revised from the independent nonprofit publisher

on health and sexuality. They also publish handbooks on birth control, sexual assault and sexually transmitted diseases—in English and French editions. Single copies are $4. Bulk copies

are sold to organizations at cost. *Montreal Health Press, Inc., P.O. Box 1000, Station Place du Parc, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2W 2N1; (514)282-1171; fax (514)282-0262; e-mail mhpmontreal@msn.com; http://www.worldsfinest.com/mhp*

The Skinny on Dieting provides common sense facts about the healthy approach to long-term weight loss and "Paunch Lines: Weight Loss Claims Are No Joke for Dieters" offers tips to identify potential diet product scams. Both publications are free from *The Federal Trade Commission, Public Reference, 6th St. and Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20580; (202)326-2222; http://www.ftc.gov*

Domestic Violence

Peace in the Home? The Response of Rabbis to Wife Abuse Within American Jewish Congregations is a study by Marc Steven Cwik in two special issues of the Journal of Psychology and Judaism (volumes 20, #4, Winter 1996; and 21 #1, Spring 1997). *Journal of Psychology and Judaism, Human Sciences Press, 233 Spring St., New York, NY 10013-1578; (212)620-8468; fax (212)807-1047.*

Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence is a two part documentary that tells the story of several women (one of them Jewish) who have suffered spousal abuse. Accompanying workshop materials suggest how synagogues and churches can address the issue and support victims. Available for a free preview, rental or purchase from *The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1914 N. 34th St., #105, Seattle, WA 98103-9058; (206)634-1903; fax (206)634-0115.*

Holocaust

Do you have something in common with Madeline Albright? If you recently discovered your Jewish roots and would like to meet others like yourself, call the *Hidden Child Foundation, ADL, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017; (212)885-7900; fax (212)867-0779.*

Legacy: The Yad Vashem Journal of Holocaust Education premiered with its first English-language issue, Fall 1996, featuring a focus on diaries from the Holocaust. Submissions are invited from the readership, who will likely include history teachers, school principals, educators, youth group leaders and others involved in teaching about the Holocaust. Subscriptions for the journal, which will appear three times a year are $35. *Legacy, Yad Vashem. P.O.B. 3477, 91034 Jerusalem, Israel; (972-2)6751637; fax (972-2)6433511.*

Education Headlines is a newsletter for teachers covering topics such as technology, Holocaust education, diversity awareness. It lists video and print resources. *ADL Materials Library, Dept. NL1, 22-D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (800)343-5540; fax 201-652-1973; e-mail tmcndy@aol.com*

Jewish Women's Centers—Places of Our Own

The Jewish Women's Program is new at Lower Manhattan's newly reopened Sol Goldman Y of the Educational Alliance. Early offerings included a course on women's stories that combined walking tours and performance art and an "immersion in text and water" (with swimsuits, caps and goggles) on Shabbat Shira (the Sabbath when the Song of the Sea is chanted), led by author E.M. Broner and director Rabbi Ellen Lippmann. The talents of other local women made possible classes such as reading Talmud from a women's perspective,with Talmud professor Judith Hauptman, a discussion of *The Maimie Papers: Letter from an Ex-Prostitute*, with founder of the Feminist Press Florence Howe, and dance midrash with choreographer Joanne Tucker. An advisory council is planning for the future. Contact director *Rabbi Ellen Lippmann at the Goldman Y, 344 E. 14th St., New York, NY 10003 (212)780-0800 x246.*

MA'YAN
The Jewish Women's Project

Ma'yan the Jewish Women's Project at the JCC on the Upper West Side has modeled several extraordinary programs since it was founded four years ago. For example Ma'yan offers several *rosh hodesh* groups: "Journeying to Creativity: women in midlife reinventing Rosh Hodesh through study, music, ritual, collage and group discussions," "Coming Home: Rosh Hodesh for Lesbians," and an early morning *rosh hodesh* group for very busy women. Since Ma'yan's inception, a Jewish feminist research group has met periodically. Two new programs are a Friday morning study group reading Marcia Falk's *Book of Blessings* and a Jewish women's film series. The Bat Mitzvah Workshop for Mothers and Daughters draws participants from across synagogue denominations. *Ma'yan, 15 W. 65th St., 8th fl., New York, NY 10023; (212)580-0099; fax (212)580-9498.*

Role Models/ Reel Models

Brave Little Girls is an exhibit that offers young readers a view of the original illustrations from a collection of 58 books starring girls—such as Anne of Green Gables, Pippi Longstocking and Mirette (on the high wire)—who are adventurous, bold, daring and funny.

Curated by Krystyna Wasserman for the National Museum of Women in the Arts, it will be on view September 9 through November 30 at the new public library in San Francisco, and December 15 through March 31, 1998 at the public library in Denver.

Seniors: Write about having grappled with and transcended a major life change. Tell about your renewal, healing or recovery through a crisis, such as a setback in finances or career, a crisis in health, the breakdown of a friendship or marriage or the death of a loved one. Or write about a how a a larger crisis such as the closing of a local factory, the Great Depression, or war has influenced you. Sponsored by the nonprofit Leibowitz Foundation, the National Legacies Contest offers cash prizes totaling $15,000 and possible publication. If you are age 60 and over, submit your story—only one—not to exceed 1,500 words, typed if possible, by December 31, 1997, to *National Legacies Contest, 163 Amsterdam Ave., Box 107, New York, NY 10023; (800)561-9024.*

Women Make Movies, distributor of women's films and videotapes such as Judith Helfand's "A Healthy Baby Girl" [see LILITH Winter 1996], is marking its 25th anniversary. Their catalogue is $5 from *Women Make Movies, 462 Broadway, 5th fl., New York, NY 10013; (212)925-0606.*

Scholarship

A fellowship in American Jewish Women's History for the 1998-99 school year—at the Myer and Rosaline Feinstein Center for American Jewish History at Temple University in Philadelphia—is being offered in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee. If you are a graduate student in this field, you can apply for the fellowship, which awards a stipend of $18,000. Submit a letter of application, a detailed synopsis of your dissertation, curriculum vitae, and letters of support from dissertation advisor and a colleague to *Dr. Murray Friedman, 117 S. 17th St., #1010, Philadelphia, PA 19103.*

Feminist Issues and Gender Problems in Israel is the theme of a special 2-part volume of Israel Social Science Research: A Multidisciplinary Journal in the Social Sciences. Guest-edited by Sylvie Fogiel-Bijaoui, Dalila Amir, Erela Shadmi, and Rachel Giora, **#1**, Spring, includes articles on wife abuse as a method of social control; "mothers" peace movements in contemporary Israel; suicide and murder employed by heroines in literature as indicators of transitional stages toward women's autonomy; and "gendering in the Israeli Defense Forces." **#2**, Fall, will include pieces on police handling of abused women; immigrant absorption policies toward Ethiopian women; the politics of abortion and reproduction; a discussion of the practice of killing female family members in order to maintain family honor among Israeli Palestinian women and the changes in this pattern in modern Israel. $15 for individuals; $25 for libraries. Order from *ISSR, Humphrey Institute for Social Research, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, P.O. Box 653, 84105, Beer Sheva, Israel; fax (972-7)647-2938; e-mail logan@bgumail.ac.il*

Tzedaka

Are your shelves cluttered with unopened make-up samples and costume jewelry? Help Jewish women leaders in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union who are being nurtured by Project Kesher. Your unwanted, unopened mini shampoo bottles and lip gloss will be forwarded where they are used in fundraising events to help sustain ongoing workshops and programs. Send to *Project Kesher, 1134 Judson Ave., Evanston IL 60202; (847)332-1994; fax (847)332-2134; e-mail 74771.142@compuserve.com*

Inclusion is just the beginning. Funds are being collected to sustain projects that promote the full participation by lesbians, gay men and bisexual women and men in Jewish life, with a special focus on activities for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth as a matter of *pikuach nefesh* (life-saving activity). You can contribute to a Pooled Fund for Jewish Community Activism on Lesbian Gay and Bisexual Issues. Contact *Sue Hoffman, The Shefa Fund, 805 E. Willow Grove Ave. #2D, Philadelphia, PA 19038; (215)247-9704, fax (215)247-1015; email shefafnd@libertynet.org*

Mothers & Others for a Livable Planet is a nonprofit grassroots project that aims to bring about a shift in overall consumption patterns by focusing the collective marketplace power of women on choices that are healthy, safe and environmentally sound. Members (who pay $25 annually) receive "The Green Guide," which is published 15 times a year, as well as legislative and program updates. *Mothers & Others, 40 W. 20th St., New York, NY 10011-4211; (888)ECO-INFO; fax (212)242-0545; e-mail mothers@igc.apc.org*

—compiled by Naomi Danis

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the ways we are

Making Whoopee

by Daniela Kuper

A month before my parents move in to the Edith S. Diamond Home for the Jewish Elderly, my mother starts calling me every night. She only wants to talk about two things: The "Diamond" and transportation.

"Wheels, baby," she says, "wheels are everything."

"How so?" Like I don't know.

"Number eleven stops right in front of the Diamond, boom, shoots straight down the drive to the Loop. I hop the six over to Water Tower, jump the Mich. Ave, connect up with the El. Bam. Easy street."

Who's she kidding? Fanny's 84 with phlebitis. It's walk. Wait. Wait. Walk. She has friends who never leave their apartments.

But she . . . she sees every art exhibit, traveling museum collection, every aquatic addition to the Shedd Aquarium at least three times. I ask her if she's noticed anything new seeing the same Monets over and over.

"New? I wouldn't say new. Honey I'm so tired when I get there I just sleep on a bench in front of his Haystacks.

"So they've got plenty to keep you busy at the Diamond." I know the answers, she knows the questions.

"Oh I could go non-stop with the yoga groups, Jacuzzi groups—we're not allowed to tub alone—the coffee shop, they have capocheena, you'll like that, Edie—and they bring in the famous talkers from everywhere."

Herb, my father, comes alive on the extension phone. He's been listening the whole time, which I sort of forgot and sort of knew. He starts calling Fanny crazy, tears down the Diamond, says he went to one of their lectures once and the speaker was a nothing. A nobody. Big deal, he says. Big lousy deal.

"Liar," my mother says.

"Pants on fire," my father says.

This is how they talk now. Second graders on a sugar high.

"Hang up, Herb."

We wait for him to say what he always says. We wait for him to set us free.

"Adios," he says, finally.

We don't answer. Silence. Click.

"At least he sounds happy," I say, to say something.

"A regular gay caballero. Listen, your father wears a diaper now. So don't talk about it when you visit him."

Visit him? "I'm not planning any visit, you're coming here, remember?"

She pauses. "Would I not come to you? But come. See him. Come. He's gone down a few notches."

"From what?"

"Don't be mean Edie. Time's a-wasting."

"How many notches?"

"He doesn't remember things."

"Neither do I, Ma."

"You? You remember everything baby, even things that never happened. Don't wait for the Messiah. Because you know what? No Messiah's waiting around for you."

It's Fanny who moves them into the retirement home. Herb goes to the synagogue and prays for a winning number at the track. She's exhausted when she visits me in Seattle, but it's a good visit. We rent old movies, hold hands.

She cleans my stove and finds parts under parts I never knew were there. Cleans them with a toothbrush and a knife. Slices up her finger. I take her to the emergency room for stitches. She's never had stitches before. She lies on the emergency room bed with her gray chicken hair sticking up and those glasses that make her eyes swim.

"Do you need anything from me Ma?"

"Sing something, that would be nice."

Doctors and nurses frown around us, moving fast.

"Like what?"

She thinks a minute. "Making Whoopee."

I go through the whole bit. Another bride, another groom, etc. She stares like I'm singing salvation and never lets go of my hand. We fall in love again.

The next day she seems better. We go out for lunch and she's piecing together parts of men she thinks would make a good life for me. That one has the eye, she says, and catch the feet on that gay banzo. Or, over there, a kind man. You need that, baby. I wish that for you.

At night, she holds court for my friends who pour her wine and eat her stories. I'm washing dinner dishes to turn them into dessert plates when she touches my cheek with her own. She feels hot and soft.

"I'm weary, dear. Kiss everyone good night for me, will you? Tell your friends I adore them. See you in the funny papers."

In the morning she's not in the kitchen and in that moment I know, but I don't give it words. I make coffee. Call her a couple of times. No answer. I drink the coffee. Climb the stairs. She's sitting up, glasses half-way down her long nose, bed jacket tied, book open, place marked. For a minute I think everything's fine, then I get in bed with her and lay on top of the quilt, over her feet the way she always liked me to. I don't call anybody. Anybody is my father. I don't cry that she's dead, I hold her feet through the quilt and think about keeping her here with me. I start praying. I pray for minutes not to be the same measured, insistent, always moving into the slippery now.

At the funeral my father does not look at me. We sit *shiva* at my Aunt Ida's and Herb let others hold him, cry with him, tell the stories, show the photos. He never once looks at me. I cut up casseroles and honey cakes in the kitchen and sing to myself, to her. ■

Daniela Kuper is a Colorado writer whose stories have appeared in The Sun, Coe Review, Cream City Review, Breaking Up is Hard to Do, and an upcoming Penguin anthology, Storming Heaven's Gate. *She has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and is completing her first novel,* Raised Voices.